

A NARRATIVE  
OF  
INIQUITIES AND BARBARITIES  
PRACTISED  
AT ROME  
IN THE NINETEENTH CENTURY.

BY  
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ALLE TERME DIOCLEZIANE, IN ROME.

*Eighth Edition.*

LONDON:  
JAMES NISBET & CO., BERNERS STREET.

CURRY, JUN., AND CO.; AND ROBERTSON AND CO., DUBLIN;  
KENNEDY, EDINBURGH; AND BRYCE, GLASGOW.

1847.



## A NARRATIVE,

ETC., ETC.

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*Also, by the same Author,*

EVIDENCE of MORE ROMAN CATHOLIC INJUSTICE ; being a Defence of the Narrative of R. Ciocchi against the Misrepresentations contained in an article in the "Dublin Review."

*Also, by the same Author,*

DEL CELIBATO in Italia. TRADUZIONE DEI QUATTRO PRETI, usciti dal Papismo per seguire la parola di Dio e la loro coscienza.

WHEN I look back upon the past, and contemplate the depths of the stormy vortex from which God, in his infinite mercy, hath delivered me, it is with the feelings of Dante's shipwrecked mariner, who

"Volgesi all' onda perigliosa e gauta."

"Turns to the perilous wide waste and stands

At gaze . . . "

CANTO i. 8.

The Church of Rome presents itself to my mind in exactly the same light in which it has been viewed by an imaginative modern writer, who most aptly compares it to the Colosseum. This solemn edifice, raised by the pride of a powerful people, was the work of slaves, who toiled only to prepare a place of torment for themselves and for others. The Church of Rome, which aspired to a lofty pre-eminence, in like manner made use of the abject submission of subjugated nations to attain her supremacy, and that, too, with-



out the blinded people perceiving that they were erecting an execrable altar to pride, where, one day, the blood of their children would flow in torrents.

Once the Flavian amphitheatre resounded with the applause of 300,000 spectators, and the Roman eagle fluttered around, a symbol of power and of daring. Now, this immense enclosure is mute, the owl, sinister augurer of ill, flaps its wings amidst the ruins, the wild bramble grows betwixt the apertures of its tottering walls, and the arena, with its blood-stained surface, calls to mind the sorrowful spectacle of innocent victims, slaughtered to glut the ferocious humours of a mighty people. And thus is it with Popery. The sun of her glory is on the wane; shaken on every side, the once stupendous fabric of her power is fast crumbling into dust. But, alas! alas! her cruel spectacles of blood are not yet abolished, her arena still re-echoes the groans of expiring victims. The Colosseum, indeed, well bears out the imagery. The Cross, sole remnant of Christ's religion, may be seen in the centre; but, as if to remind those who would approach that they are slaves, the entrance is guarded by soldiers bearing muskets with bayonets affixed, on which is inscribed in large characters, "Christian Charity."

Rejoice with me, benevolent readers, that I have come out unscathed from the den of

lions. I was one of those unfortunate beings upon whom the Roman tigers had fixed their claws. Victim of an Inquisition, which, in the nineteenth century, ought with shame to conceal itself in the caverns of the dread abyss whence it came to desolate the earth, I should not now have the privilege of making known my sufferings in these pages, but that I have been rescued by a miracle of Providence, from its bloody fangs. Believe not the subtle protestations of the Romish tyrant, who would persuade men that the gallows and the stake were not of her erection, but that they originated with those sovereigns who sanctioned laws in favour of the Church. Were such the fact, the Inquisition would have ceased at that period when indignant nations cast her from them, and must, in the present age, have been entirely forgotten.

In Rome the Inquisition avowedly exists. In other parts of Italy it has changed its name, but not its character, for government, in a degree not less galling, tyrannizes over the consciences of men. Dominicans have given place to commissioners and inspectors, without renouncing their right to search out the secrets of all hearts under the veil of a supposed sacrament, satisfied to find victims on whom to place their iron grasp. Whoever affirms that the bloody persecutions of the Vatican have ceased, asserts a falsehood. The



following pages afford ample testimony to the barbarity and tyranny of the religious system of the Church of Rome at the present day.

The first seven years of my life glided happily away in the pure enjoyment of an affectionate mother's love. It was then decided by my parents to place me in a college, that I might be trained to piety and learning, and associated with youths of my own rank and standing. In furtherance of this object I was sent to the college of the regular clergy, known as that of S. Redentore, in the city of Frosinone. This, commonly called the Order of the Liguorini, was founded by Alphonso di Liguori, at a time when the Jesuits were rapidly losing ground, and was designed to take their place in arresting the progress of European civilization. In truth, this new society laboured more strenuously in the attainment of their object than did the Jesuits themselves. They, to a certain degree, encouraged learning, but the Liguorini, besides adopting their iniquitous maxims, and imitating their inveterate obstinacy, forged a new weapon; making themselves promoters of total ignorance.

Having arrived at the college, I quickly overcame the grief occasioned by this my first separation from my parents. Maternal caresses were followed by the kindnesses of the Fathers, who, upon seeing me, might possibly say among themselves, "There is a

small fish which will be easily caught with the bait."

It was their first care to instil into my mind an ardent devotion and a restless fervour, qualities which, in the heart of the young, readily take deep root. Being naturally of a docile disposition, I willingly and sedulously followed their advice, and during the five years of my sojourn among them, my life was one uninterrupted course of devout occupations and frivolous ceremonies, dignified by them with the name of piety. Half an hour every morning was dedicated to the meditation of great and abstruse mysteries, mysteries difficult even to the most profound thinkers. Three subjects were usually read; upon which we were all exhorted to reflect; they were generally chosen from the four last things—death, judgment, hell, and heaven. Was it to be expected that boys from seven to ten years of age should derive any advantage from such a custom? A practice beneficial, no doubt, to persons of matured minds, but only calculated to produce in children weariness or melancholy. Nor was this all, for being but just out of bed, and our eyes scarcely open, we not unfrequently slept profoundly the whole of the time. It was certainly little worth while forcing us thus to chafe our knees, dozing on the benches of a chapel, when we might, with infinitely more comfort to ourselves, have been enjoying our



repose in bed. Once a-week I went to throw myself at the feet of my confessor, not to seek for absolution for sins, which at that happy age I had not committed, but to listen to insidious questions tending to excite evil passions in my breast. From thence I proceeded to the altar, to eat of the bread, and to adore it. Let me here observe, that notwithstanding all their systems of theology enjoin that no child shall be admitted to the holy table before twelve years of age, I was made an exception to this necessary rule, being permitted at the age of seven years to communicate.

What shall I say of the practice of corporeal mortification, to which I was incited by the counsels of my confessor? I shall, amongst others, name that of flagellation, which was prescribed to the youths of the college every Friday, when assembled in the chapel. Each one, at the extinguishing of the candles, was to strike his shoulders with a lash of knotted cords during the slow and solemn recital of the psalm "*Miserere*." I was sometimes commanded to repeat seven Ave Marias, in memory of the seven sorrows of the Virgin, with my hands the whole time placed between my knees and the pavement. It was also frequently suggested to me that I should, at breakfast or at dinner, leave my portion of food untouched, and that I should at times abstain from those amusements most

congenial to my lively disposition, in order that I might, by such acts of self-denial, acquire command over my appetites and desires. Sacrifices of this nature are called by the friars in Italy, "Flowers whose odour is agreeable to Mary."

My ready application, and the tractableness of my disposition, led the Fathers to believe that I was a fit object for a member of their community; they therefore lost no time in persuading my parents to dedicate me to the ecclesiastical ministry, for which they declared that I already showed a decided inclination. I ask of you, my dear readers, whether the impressions of a child eight years of age, induced by circumstances, ought to have been received as a decision in a case so serious? In bland words they communicated to me their own wishes and the consent of my family, drawing at the same time a brilliant picture of the sacerdotal vocation. It is easy to imagine that my desired acquiescence was not long withheld. At that age, had they told me to renounce human nature, as a mark of gratitude to the Madonna, I should have done it with the same eagerness with which I should have swallowed a sweetmeat. Seven days after, I was "tonsured" by Monsignor Maria Cipriani, Bishop of Veroli. Behold me now united to the clergy by the contrivance of others, in the same manner in which it is customary in some countries to



enrol soldiers, drawing from their mouths an imprudent "Yes," amid the foaming glasses and boisterous mirth of a joyous feast, with the allurements of extravagant promises of far off advantages.

Readers, question me not as to the usages, the mysteries, and the intrigues of the sect of the Liguorini, for at that tender age appearances under the empire of the senses wear the features of reality; and most assuredly, from appearances, I could not do otherwise than look upon them as incarnate angels, breathing only love to God and zeal for the eternal salvation of souls. Were I now to judge them, from the manner in which they fastened to my foot the first link of the chain that afterwards bound me so roughly, I should call them "*fanatics*," for I believe they were sincere, and actuated by mistaken zeal. For five years I studied in this college, and was from thence sent to the college of the Jesuits at Rome.

On being presented to the governor of the college, he immediately admitted me to the study of the classics and of rhetoric, and read to me the rules prescribed for the establishment. They differed very little from those of the Liguorini, and were as follows:—To attend the school twice a-day, to hear mass every day, and during the time to read the praises of the Virgin Mary, to confess once a-week, to receive the Sacrament every

Sunday; not to frequent places of public amusement, not to raise the eyes when traversing the streets, and to read only books approved by the masters.

I listened with patience, while he commented largely on the importance of the exact fulfilment of these various duties; but when, in conclusion, he emphatically added, "Remember, these rules are binding upon all, but more particular so upon you, who have dedicated yourself to God," I exclaimed, "How, Father? On quitting my college I believed myself free from all obligations there imposed upon me. It is not my intention to follow the ecclesiastical career."

The Jesuit, astonished, stood with the disappointed air of a child, who, thinking to pounce upon a bird in its nest, stretches forth his hand to seize his prey, and finds it gone. He opened his eyes, fixed them upon me, examined me from head to foot, and then repeated the words,

"It is not your intention to follow the ecclesiastical career?" adding, in a solemn tone, "Why, my son, you have received the tonsure, you have made a promise to God, and God is not to be trifled with. Such promises may not be revoked; if you now draw back, woe be unto you!—you will receive the punishment due to your guilt,—you will set upon yourself the seal of your damnation."

"What, Father! is a promise made at eight



years of age to bind me for life ? and am I to be a priest by force ?” I said.

“ Oh no, not by force. The dedication of yourself to the Church was voluntary. As to your youth—tender plants are pleasing to God, and Mary loves those children who place themselves under her tutelage, and give themselves to her service. I perceive that this is a temptation of the evil one. The best remedy under such circumstances, is to have recourse to God, through the medium of Mary. We are now arrived at the month peculiarly her own. Go—throw yourself upon your knees in your chamber, and with true humility write an address to that powerful advocate,—ask counsel of her,—and be assured that she will inspire you for your good.” Thus saying, he dismissed me.

With regard to this advice, it is necessary I should explain that there is a custom prevailing in Rome, of dedicating the entire month of May to the service of the Virgin. All the students of the Roman College, who are under the guidance of the Jesuits, are required in this month to write an address to her, bearing the following inscription :—

TO THE MOST HOLY MARY,

QUEEN OF HEAVEN AND EARTH.

In this address each young lad exposes his peculiar wants to Mary, and opens to her the most secret recesses of his heart ; asking her

for assistance to enable him to repress those passions which he feels himself least able to govern. These addresses are placed upon the shrine of the Madonna, where they remain till the last day of the month, when they are burnt amidst dedicatory songs ; the youths being taught to believe that petitions thus offered will infallibly have their effect, if not in this world, in the world to come.

Who cannot, in this usage, perceive the depth and subtlety of the Jesuit, employed to discover the inclinations and predominant passions of the youth under his guidance ? Alas ! poor youths !

But to return to my narrative. I wrote my address without delay, not because I had full faith in its efficacy, but to avoid singularity, having before me the example of about three thousand youths who attended these schools. Certain it is that the Jesuits did not, from my epistle, read my heart, for by it I appeared rather to have obtained their good will.

My mother’s constant praise of these men, and her reiterated injunctions to me to imitate their example, together with the kindness that they uniformly exercised towards me, inspired me little by little with a certain degree of attachment to them, but an all-merciful God saved me from becoming one of their disciples. The Jesuits were induced to look upon me with a favourable eye, from



perceiving in me a fervent devotion, joined with an ardent zeal for the conversion of souls, and for preaching, which manifested themselves in my juvenile discourses. These they considered qualities proper to form an apostle, and they sought by every means in their power, to make me conceive the idea of becoming one.

To this end they frequently made *Protestantism* the subject of their conversation, and never failed to represent that faith in a most detestable light. I therefore hated the very name of *Protestant*, and looked upon the English nation as a people of monsters. And how should I do otherwise? I was constantly told that the Protestants worshipped Mammon instead of God, that they did not believe in Christ, that they slaughtered each other daily like ferocious beasts, that they put the Roman Catholics to death, that they attended to no civil restrictions, but continually lived in a state of anarchy. These misrepresentations, these diabolical assertions, were received by me as incontrovertible truths. Imagine, then, the prejudices I imbibed,—but nevertheless I thirsted with a desire to recall these lost ones to the true religion, to reclaim their disordered lives,—and the Fathers, in order to keep alive the fire already kindled in my bosom, styled me the “Juvenile Reformer of the British Isles.”

Thus, under the veil of religion, was in-

stilled into my heart the most bitter hatred. Oh! how little did I then think that a day would come, in which I should be placed, by the hand of Providence, in those very isles. That time has arrived, and I now dwell among a people whom I once believed my veriest enemies—a people whom I once hated in the name of the God of peace and love! O deceivers! They call those enemies of Christ who, denying it to the creature, offer worship and adoration to God alone—they call those contemners of the Saviour’s blood, who, disclaiming all merit in themselves, look for salvation only in the efficacy of Christ’s atonement—they call those profaners of the Gospel who, leaving human inventions, refer everything to that divine code of truth. Blind that I was! O that I could recover from the vortex of the past, the years spent in ignorance and idolatry.

Members of the Church of Rome! examine for yourselves the Bible—confront with it the rule of faith which man has presented for your credence, and place your reliance on that rule, only so far as it is in accordance with the sacred test! Is there any conformity between God and Mammon—between Christ and Belial—between light and darkness? When I opened the sacred volume, the glorious light of divine truth shone around, and I, like Saul, was changed from a persecutor to a brother of believers.



I, at length, beheld the English ; but I did not, with them find anarchy and bloodshed. Instead of hatred I found social love, the precious fruit of the Gospel—instead of disorder, liberty and justice. Is liberty of conscience a crime ? Is reverence for the Word of God a fault ?—that reverence which leads them to reject adulterations, fraudulent additions, and human embellishments, which the spirit of pride and of avarice has dared, with a profane hand, to mingle with the holy volume ? Answer, O Rome ! answer if you are able ! My dear English brethren in the faith, pardon and forget, I entreat you, the hatred that I confess to have once nourished towards you ; it was imbibed in ignorance, and no longer finds a place in my heart. Your kind reception of me—your pious conversation—your excellent examples, have assisted in strengthening that which was begun in me, but the Father of mercies had worked the marvellous change before my arrival among you.

I had now been receiving instruction from the Jesuits for nearly four years. The society of so many youths of my own age, prevented my feeling the full weight of the monotonous life to which I was condemned ; but nevertheless a weariness began to take possession of my mind. Almost every day was I compelled to listen to long discourses and violent declamations, in which the God of goodness and mercy was represented in a menacing

attitude—ever ready to hurl his thunderbolts—ever casting victims into hell. Then again, Italian literature was entirely banished, and I most severely felt the prohibition to read the poets, books which have so many charms for youth, and which I elsewhere saw in the hands of every one. Friends at length secretly provided me with the works of Metastasio, Goldoni, Tasso, Pignotti, and others. I found indescribable pleasure in perusing these authors, and soon made myself acquainted with their respective styles. This was not my only transgression of the Jesuitical rules ; for, when walking in the streets, my eyes were often raised to the countenances of others, as I considered that it was not necessary to be discourteous in order to be modest. From these various causes, I felt a growing aversion to the yoke of the Jesuits, and was resolved, if possible, to break a chain that daily became more galling.

I therefore addressed a letter to my mother, in which, with all filial affection, I disclosed to her my firm resolution of no longer remaining in this college, and my ardent wish to return to the bosom of my family. I represented to her that the gratification of this desire would prove no obstacle to the pursuit of my studies, as I could continue them in the schools of the Sapienza, which is the principal college in Rome. My mother, from the determined tenour of my letter, deemed it prudent to



comply with my request, and I was, a month afterwards, restored to liberty. Oh, what joyful sensations did I experience! That day was one of the happiest of my life. I found myself once more in the midst of my dearest friends. I was freed from the austere rules of the Jesuits, and felt that I could, without restraint, follow my studies and pursuits. It seemed to me as though I were in another world.

I now began to frequent the schools of La Sapienza, and in a short time contracted an intimacy with many of my fellow-students. The evenings which were devoted to social intercourse and agreeable society, were, to me, a reward for the application of the day. I had arrived at an age when the heart first begins to feel sensible of tender emotions, when it begins to feel the pleasures of existence, and the society into which I was thrown served to convince me that the female sex were not dangerous ministers of Satan, as the Jesuits had insinuated, but creatures designed by God to soften the asperities of man. This new life appeared to me a path strewn with flowers.

We attended school five days in the week; Sundays and Thursdays were holidays. On these two days, after the devotional exercises of the morning, we assembled outside the city walls, to the number of about two hundred, all youths from sixteen to nineteen years of

age, for the purpose of exercising ourselves in the art of war. The ideas we had acquired, from the study of our national history, of the greatness of the Roman people, and of their military exploits, had aroused in us a desire to render ourselves skilful in arms. We were further stimulated to these proceedings from perusing the Wars of Napoleon, the History of America, and other warlike treatises. Hence we conceived and followed out the project of organizing two armies, each of which was headed by a general. We took our positions, and, following the evolutions and manœuvres as well as we were able, commenced an attack. Two trumpets and two drums animated the combatants on each side; banners were displayed; swords, lances, pistols, cannon, and other implements of war, all of wood, composed our arms. After having exercised ourselves for the space of three or four hours, we returned to the city, some abandoning themselves to the innocent joy of having gained a bloodless victory, others to the passing sorrow of a transient defeat. We took the precaution of re-entering the city in small parties, lest our numbers should attract notice, and we should be forbidden to repeat our diversion. Can you believe it, O reader, that an innocent and healthy amusement, invented by youths devoid of all political knowledge, ignorant, even, at that age, of the tyranny under which



they were born, could rouse in the tyrants the demon suspicion ?

The Father Braudi, a Jesuit, plotted the dissolution of this festive union. Would that he had stopped there ! This man, confessor to my mother, who gives herself up to the exercise of her religion, passing whole days at the feet of a crucifix, or an image of some saint, cruelly made use of the piety of the mother as a powerful weapon against the son. My father and sisters, being of the same religious turn of mind, seconded his instigations as zealously as though they had been warnings from heaven. There is, indeed, no member of my family who would not, at the command of a friar or a priest, willingly sacrifice even life. The Father Braudi demanded of them the sacrifice of myself, and they, as the sequel will prove, unsuspectingly yielded. Oh, infatuated parents ! Oh, confidence betrayed ! The wily Jesuit thus reasoned with himself : “ The most effectual way of dispersing these restless youths, who may at some future period render themselves formidable to the government of the priests, would be to take away the leaders. Of these, the foremost and least tractable is R. Ciocchi ; when he is removed, it will be an easy matter to separate the rest. His family are scrupulously devout ; let us attack their vulnerable point, they will not oppose themselves to the design of making a

saint of their son.” So argued the Jesuit, and thereupon was my fate decreed.

Behold me, then, condemned to be a saint by force. He commenced his scheme by representing to my mother the danger of my present pursuits, and added, that unless a remedy were applied to the disease at an early stage, it might, in the end, prove fatal. He told her that the signs of a tempestuous future were but too manifest in my present conduct,—that my passions were violent—and that the road which I was taking with such rapid strides, was the road to perdition. What a reproach, he continually whispered in her ear, that a holy family should be dishonoured by a wild member. Who knows into what precipice this inconsiderate youth may, in the course of time, throw himself ? And yet, with only a little firmness, a little energy, all may be well. It is an attested fact, that continual droppings wear away stones. What wonder, then, if the reiterated and insidious words of the priest sunk, by degrees, deeply into the heart of my mother, who looked upon him as the minister of God, and believed that she heard, in his exhortations, a celestial voice ! Too true, thought she, is that which this holy man tells me of my son. If, at the age of sixteen, warm with the sentiments of piety instilled into his heart at the colleges, he shews himself thus



unmanageable, what will become of him at a later period, when his impetuous passions shall have obtained a stronger hold? Tormented by these doubts, to which maternal fears gave gigantic forms, and to which the constant insinuations of the Jesuits added monstrous physiognomies, she, at length, resolved to give herself to the undertaking.

Secure in my integrity, and perfectly unconscious of the storm that was gathering over my head, it was not without a mixture of surprise and perplexity, that I observed in every member of my family a certain anxiety of manner as regarded myself. Their looks bespoke a sentiment of tenderness mingled with compassion. Their conversation abounded more than usual with ascetic phrases concerning the salvation of the soul, the dangers of the world, the wiles of the devil, the weakness of human nature, the necessity of repressing the passions, and similar subjects. I knew not what to conjecture from all this; when, one day, my mother, calling me aside, pressed me affectionately to her bosom, kissed my forehead, and said:—

“My son, the salvation of your soul is the most anxious wish of my heart, and it is with feelings of the deepest regret that I have, of late, marked your growing attachment to the frivolities of the world. Quit, I conjure you,

those associates with whom you are now linked, and who will, otherwise, one day prove your ruin.”

I instantly replied, “Mother, the young men with whom I associate are well educated, and of good families. I devote the greater portion of my time to study, and never neglect the duties of religion. What harm, then, can arise from my uniting myself with them for a few hours’ amusement on the Sunday and Thursday? Our proceedings are all carried on in public, and there is nothing of which we can possibly be ashamed.”

“Ah no, my son! but yet you must relinquish your present pursuits.”

“But what do you fear? What do you desire of me?”

Here again, embracing me, she said, “If you love me do not oppose my wishes, but prepare yourself to enter some college for the purpose of studying philosophy.”

As if struck with a thunderbolt, I remained stupified, but after a few seconds, the aversion which I had conceived to those monastic prisons, overcame my astonishment, and, in a burst of indignation, I sprang up, exclaiming —“Oh, no! never, never shall that be! Now I perceive that some unworthy, some cruel friar, envious of my happiness, has been advising you”

I should have continued my exclamation, and who knows what more dangerous expres-



sions might have fallen from my lips, had not the copious tears of my dear mother, who was totally unprepared for such a reply, softened my resentment. I flew to my room, and locking myself in, refused to answer any one who came to summon me ; and it was not till the following day that, subdued by the entreaties of my sisters, I quitted my chamber.

I went immediately to my father, who, in kind terms, reproached me for my arrogance towards my mother, and signified his unalterable determination that I should enter a college. My mother at this moment joined us. . . . Let me here be permitted to wish, with the patriarch Job, that this hour might be blotted out from the number of the hours of my life. The agreement for my slavery was now concluded—my replies were still negative ; but the opponents with whom I had to contend were powerful and numerous ; and vigorous as was my resistance, I was at length obliged to yield. The tears of my mother, the imperativeness of my father, and the prayers of my sisters, triumphed over my reluctance. They concluded with saying to me—“ You will only remain in college the necessary time for the study of philosophy, and then you will return home.”

Whilst the Jesuit Braudi was employed in deciding my destiny, other Jesuits were likewise exerting themselves to dissolve the union of the three hundred. Giovanni Lalli was

sent to Pignano, to fill the post of Under Chancellor ; and to get rid of him the more speedily, the Jesuits hastened on his examination for the taking of his degree. Argenti, through the recommendation of the Jesuits, obtained an appointment in the bank of Torlonia. The son of the Cavalier Serazzani, though reluctant, was finally compelled, at the instigation of these men, to enrol himself as cadet of dragoons, while his brother was placed among the noble guards. The Father Perroni, a Jesuit, and confessor to the princely family of Ghigi, used his utmost influence with the parents to induce them to exercise their authority in preventing their son from joining the meetings : this young man for a time refused obedience, but finally his removal was effected by his family procuring for him the appointment of lieutenant of the line. These were the heads of the union, and they being removed, it was speedily dissolved.

In the meanwhile, the time for my being transferred from the paternal roof to the regular Pontifical college, held by the Benedictine and Cistercian monks, in the monastery of San Bernardo, alle Terme Diocleziane, was fast approaching ; I firmly believed that I was only entering these fatal doors in order to complete my studies, and that my seclusion would be but temporary. . . . Alas ! delusive hope ! Persons of sinister aspect were constantly coming and going from my



house. The Canon del Bufolo, D. Biagio Valentini, both apostolical missionaries, and D. Nivardo Tassini, Superior of the Cistercian College, were the architects of the fraud that was fabricated for my ruin, without my having the least conception of their dark designs. It was resolved by them that, whether I would or not, I should be a Benedictine and Cistercian Monk. Some persons will inquire—But were not your parents in league with these men? No. They, like myself, were deceived, as will be hereafter seen.

The day for my departure arrived. My mother and sisters oft repeated their affectionate embraces, and the tears of the family were general. I entered the carriage. An icy chilliness fell upon my heart as I cast a last look upon my beloved home; something like a presentiment seemed to say, "This house is no longer thine." In passing through the streets, I saw many of my companions, who, ignorant of my new misfortune, gave me a joyous token of recognition; in return, I covered my face with my handkerchief to hide from them my tears. This was on the 20th December, 1836. Behold me now at the entrance of the monastery of San Bernardo, alle Terme Diocleziane. Behold me at the commencement of a stormy period of my life. Behold me about to recite a series of events of incredible appearance, but true and incontestable.

## FIRST YEAR.

ON entering the College I was met by the Superiors, who received me most courteously, and were lavish in their expressions of kindness and regard. I ascribed these acts of politeness to goodness of heart—perfectly unconscious that they were merely adorning me with flowers, like the victims of old, previously to conducting me to the altar, to bleed under the knife of the sacrifice. My brother the priest, who had accompanied me, soon after took leave, and I was left alone with my enemies. Three apartments had been prepared for me, and to these I was conducted. The first was, as they told me, destined for the reception of visitors, the second for study, and the third for sleeping. Imagine my surprise and dismay at being compelled, after three days, to quit these spacious apartments, where my heart, oppressed with anguish, at the loss of liberty, found a little satisfaction in the comforts which surrounded me.

During these three days of less severe imprisonment, I was permitted to roam at will over the monastery and garden. Perhaps this shadow of liberty was allowed me, in order that I might, by degrees, become accustomed to more rigorous confinement. I



wandered anxiously among the labyrinths and mazes of the cloister, hoping to find the corridor appropriated to the novices, being most desirous of speaking with the young Apollonj, whom I knew, and who had been for some little time an inmate of the monastery—but my search was fruitless.

About ten o'clock on the third day, I was conducted to the sumptuous apartment of the General, who invited me to join him in taking chocolate. While we were partaking of this refreshment, he began, with a serious tone and manner, to extol the blessed life of those who, having bid adieu to a deceitful world, consecrate themselves to God in the tranquil recesses of a cloister. He expatiated on the benefit to be derived from this seclusion, and its sanctifying influence on the soul. Being at a loss to understand why he should treat thus largely on the merits of a kind of life which in no way concerned me, I interrupted him repeatedly with questions.

"When will my scholastic duties commence?" said I.

He answered me drily, "The rules shall be given to you when you have joined the other excellent young men of this institution," and then immediately resumed his discourse on the importance of the salvation of the soul.

"How much time will be required to terminate the study of philosophy?" was my next inquiry.

"I have told you that you shall have the rules. I hope much from you, my son," was his reply.

His manner of speaking did not alarm me, nor awaken any suspicion in my breast, such phrases being common to the Roman priests and friars. He rang the bell, and the only impression this interview left upon my mind was, that if beatitude consisted in exquisite beverage, the Father General had good reason to say—happy the cenobitical life; for never before had I tasted such delicious chocolate. There is not a family in Rome, however noble, but must yield the palm to the priests, in the luxury and daintiness of the viands set upon their table.

At the sound of the bell, the master of the novices made his appearance, and the General, embracing me, consigned me to his care. His kiss, like that of the traitor Judas, was a kiss of betrayal; it was the prelude to six years of rigorous imprisonment—six years of prolonged suffering. The monk conducted me along a corridor, at the end of which was a massive door, through which we passed. As he was in the act of closing it, I inquired whether I should be permitted to pass in and out at pleasure.

He smiled, and replied—

"Lasciate ogni speranza, o voi che entrate."

"All hope abandon, you who enter here."

DANTE, Canto iii. 3.



"What, Father!" I added, in alarm, "is this the gate of hell?"

"On the contrary," said he, "it is the door of your eternal salvation." He locked the door and rang a bell, when suddenly I found myself in the presence of ten young men, from fifteen to sixteen years of age, two of whom warmly embraced me. The master left me with these youths, and went to give notice, perhaps, to his brother monks, that the bird was in the cage.

My companions led me into a room, but avoided replying to my numerous inquiries respecting the mode of living, the usages, and the restrictions of this institution. Strict silence, on these points, had been enjoined, and they were menaced with severe punishment in the event of disobeying. In truth, reply was needless; for their pallid countenances, sunken eyes, and attenuated forms, conveyed an answer far more eloquent than words. I had known several of them at their homes, vigorous in health, ruddy, joyous, and my eyes filled with tears at seeing them so strangely altered. "The same change will shortly take place in thee; thou also wilt be pale and emaciated like them," whispered a voice within. But, quickly chasing the unwelcome thought, "No," said I, "it cannot be. Their case bears no parallel with mine, — the monkish habit which they wear, justifies, in some degree, the austerity of their

lives, and hence the change that has taken place. But it is not my intention to assume the tunic—my object in coming here is to study; with that understanding only did I consent to enter this enclosure."

One by one the young men quitted the apartment, and I was left with Appollonj. Finding himself alone with me, and remembering the close friendship which had ever existed between us, he threw aside all caution, and anxiously inquired—

"Is it long since you saw my mother and sisters? Are they well? What are they doing?"

"How is this?" I answered with astonishment; "Your mother writes to you weekly, and is satisfied with the assurance that you are happy in your vocation. I do not understand you. It appears to me that the case is far otherwise; and these tears bear strong evidence that all is not well."

"My friend! my friend!" he exclaimed, giving full vent to his feelings, "to what a place art thou come! I never receive letters from my family, and what you have just told me convinces me that my letters are kept back by these monsters."

"Oh, no, you are mistaken. I know to a certainty that your mother receives them punctually."

"Yes, *those written by the monks in my name, but not my own*," was his reply.



"Impossible!" I exclaimed, amazed at such a declaration;—"it is impossible that they can have arrived at such a depth of wickedness."

"It is, alas! but too true; and I am grieved that you should have placed yourself in their terrible talons."

"If it be indeed so, I will force the door, or jump from the window; nothing shall detain me here." The blood rose in my veins, and I should have rushed towards the door, to attempt an impossible flight, had not the poor fellow held me back, and with a supplicating voice, cried, "Oh, for mercy's sake, have pity upon an unfortunate youth! Sacredly restrain your feelings—disclose not a word of what has passed between us; otherwise a heavy punishment will assuredly fall upon me, and, God knows, a few drops of the water of Tofania may be in store for both of us!"

"For both of us? My object in coming here is study, and you say that they will dare to give me the water of Tofania? No, no, it cannot be; this is but a phantom of your heated imagination."

"I repeat that what I have uttered is true; I conjure you to submit, as I have done, or in a few days you may cease to exist."

"How? Die! Die in the hands of these cruel men! O, unhappy me, where am I?"

He took my hand affectionately, and said,

"Calm yourself, since weeping will do nothing for you, and you will have time enough to weep. Perhaps God may aid you; and let me entreat of you, as you desire peace, as you value your own life, as you value mine, never allow the conversation that has passed between us to escape your lips; and be careful to yield a prompt obedience to the commands of the monks. Adieu." Having thus spoken, he hastily quitted the apartment, and I was left alone.

He never again reverted to this conversation, which often made me doubtful whether the melancholy picture he had drawn was really true, or whether he had spoken at the instigation of the monks, with a view to frightening me into passive obedience. But I afterwards reflected, that probably his silence proceeded from prudential motives; as he no doubt soon discovered that I was of a temperament too warm and hasty quietly to submit to oppressive measures, and therefore avoided exposing us both to resentment of our superiors, by the recital of wrongs, which would have served only to urge me to open rebellion. However this might be, may God in his mercy protect him, and alleviate those sufferings which, through his own free choice, he has brought upon himself!

Being greatly agitated, I paced my room for some time without heeding anything; but



at length, becoming more calm, I stood quietly and began to examine the objects by which I was surrounded. The furniture consisted of a tolerable bed, six chairs, a small table, a wardrobe, shelves for books attached to the wall, and a praying desk, above which was placed a large crucifix; a picture of the Virgin and child was suspended from the wall by the side of the bed. What most oppressed my heart was, to see the care with which they had shut me out from every way of escape, by placing in the window a massive bureau of wood, firmly secured, leaving above an aperture only a span in size, through which came in the air to breathe—"Sole gift of heaven." It seemed as though earth had conspired against me; but looking upwards and taking courage, I thought within myself, "Thou only, O Lord, hast not abandoned me." Three hours passed away in painful solitude, peopled only with bitter remembrances. Sighing and weeping, the name of my mother rose to my lips. She, ignorant of the abyss into which I had been precipitated, perhaps at that very moment thought me happy.

At length the dinner bell rang—a joyous sound to the monks—but one sad enough to me, for the best of food brings no joy to the unhappy. I was summoned by my young companions, and accompanied them to the refectory. Here we found assembled the

Superior General, the Prior, and the masters and monks. On entering all eyes were fixed upon me. They said a grace, which occupied about ten minutes, and then sat down to table. When settled, a young man ascended the pulpit and read, during the whole of the repast, portions from the sermons of San Bernardo.

Our dinner consisted daily of excellent soup, roast and boiled meat, fruit, cheese, bread in abundance, and wine at discretion. On festivals and holidays a greater variety of dishes was served. For luncheon they gave us a glass of wine and a biscuit; at supper we had a kind of soup, in Rome commonly called *pappina*, a portion of meat or fish, salad, cheese, and fruit; and at breakfast we were served with coffee or chocolate. As far as regarded the table, there was certainly no cause for complaint.

I anxiously inquired of the master of the novices when our studies would commence—solacing myself with the reflection that the earlier we began our pursuits, the sooner should I be set at liberty. He answered, that the duties of the school could not begin till all the students had arrived. In the course of a fortnight the number, which amounted to twenty-four, was filled up. All, excepting myself, immediately adopted the collegiate dress. One was presented to me, that I also might cover myself with a hood.



But no, that could not be ; nothing was farther from my intention. Clothe myself in a tunic !!—the idea appeared so strange, so fantastic, and presented itself to my mind under forms so odious, though at the same time so ridiculous, that while it stirred me to mirth, it made me tremble. In vain did my companions entreat and remonstrate, representing that this was a usage to which it was absolutely necessary to conform. I answered them—“For you who are come here by your own free choice, with the express purpose of making yourselves monks, it is well,—but for me it will never do.” All my companions, with the exception of D. Cherubino, had voluntarily given themselves to the sacrifice ; but this young man had, like myself, been victimized. He had not yet completed his fifteenth year. Circumstances, age, and misfortune, bound us to each other ; we mutually promised fidelity and assistance, and for some time failed not in resisting our common enemies ; but he, being at length worn out with suffering and ill-treatment, bent his back to the yoke, and yielded himself into their hands.

Remembering that in all colleges, youths admitted as students, assume a particular costume, I after a time submitted to what now appeared to me but a small matter,—the adoption of the collegiate dress. In consenting, therefore, to this metamorphosis, I looked

upon it as a mere form, and hoped soon to lay aside this outward sign of my evil genius. The dress, which was white, consisted of a tunic, a scapulary, a hood, and a broad sash, all made of a woven material composed of silk, worsted, and cotton ; plaited frills were turned over the wrists and collar. On festivals a long white cloak was worn in addition.

No sooner was I clothed with the tunic than I received the welcome announcement that at the expiration of three days the studies would commence. But here, alas ! another vexatious disappointment awaited me. Instead of studying philosophy, as I had been led to expect, it was decided that we should previously repeat the course of Italian and Latin literature. The reason assigned for this change was, that all were not sufficiently conversant with the languages to enter upon philosophical studies. I was compelled to submit, and the day of liberty which I so ardently longed for was thus one year further removed.

Notwithstanding my annoyances, this first year passed away with astonishing rapidity—the days and months rolled on almost as unheeded as the waters glide, to a child who sports upon a river's bank. In order to ensnare and subdue the rebellious spirits of the involuntary victims, our every wish was gratified ; besides which, assiduous applica-



tion to study so devoured our time, that we almost confounded the rising and setting of the sun. The constant passing from our rooms to the refectory, from the refectory to the school, from thence to the choir, together with the walk, the *divertissement*, and garden, contributed not a little towards relieving the monotony of our prison. It is true, that at times, when thoughts of my home and family presented themselves, a thorn would pierce my heart most acutely ; but, however, I strove to soften the bitterness of separation by frequently writing letters to my parents, who were the only persons we were allowed to address, and replies were always returned to me with scrupulous exactness. Were these really my mother's answers, or were they those of the barbarous monks ? I leave that to your divination, my dear readers, reserving the elucidation of the doubt to a later period. The letters addressed to me by my acquaintance were, by monkish policy, invariably withheld.

The year was now drawing to its close without my having been allowed a single interview with any member of my family. It sometimes happened that I met one or other of my relations or friends in the streets, but then the rule was not to raise the eyes to their countenances, giving them merely a slight token of recognition by raising the hat from the head. I must confess that I never

observed this discourteous regulation, but always returned the salutation of those who saluted me ; and my eyes, which revealed the secrets of my soul, were fixed upon them as though they would say, Come to the aid of a prisoner. And yet, in comparison with those that followed, this first twelvemonth was rather a year of freedom than imprisonment.

The only alteration this mode of life had at present produced in my appearance was, loss of colour ; and this change was, no doubt, to be attributed to sedentary occupations and want of air in my bed-room. The monks had cunningly forbidden me the use of a looking-glass, but I supplied its place by fixing a piece of black paper behind the panes of glass in the window, by which means I was enabled to see my face very distinctly, especially at sunrise, and thus it was that I became sensible of my altered appearance. In the midst of this discovery I found comfort in the reflection, that this pallor was the result of a year's serious application ; and that as one year was already past, so was my chain shortened a third of its length. But oh ! terrible mistake ! I thought that the same even tenor of life observed up to this time would have been continued for me in the coming years. I thought that after the third year the fatal doors would open to me. I had forgotten the ominous sentence once so emphatically sounded in my ears—



"Lasciate ogni speranza, o voi che entrate."

"All hope abandon, ye who enter here."

DANTE, Canto iii. 3.

I had likewise forgotten that on the doors seen by Dante was inscribed the discomfiting epigraph—

"Per me si va nella citta dolente;  
Per me si va nell' eterno dolore;  
Per me si va tra la perduta gente."

"Through me you pass into the city of woe;  
Through me you pass into eternal pain;  
Through me among the people lost for aye."

CANTO iii. 1.

## SECOND YEAR.

THE reader must naturally suppose that the rules of the institution were placed in my hands, according to the promise of the General. But no such thing. I was at the close of the year as ignorant of their regulations as on the day of my arrival. It was in vain that I questioned the masters, and sometimes the servants, all were alike silent upon the subject.

I was one day startled by a rap at my door. At this unusual and unexpected sound my heart beat as if apprehensive of some new misfortune. The master of the novices entered, and after having pronounced a flatter-

ing exordium on the docility I had hitherto exhibited in adapting myself to new customs, and in my ready obedience to the superiors, he concluded in words that too plainly shewed me that there were grounds for my fears. "Now, then," said he, "it only remains for you to give one further proof of your submission. Your companions have no doubt informed you of the custom to which it is necessary to conform after one year's residence in this college."

"Another custom, Father! is there no termination to the customs of this place? I expected that I had gone through all the requisite formalities."

"You need not alarm yourself. Do not suppose that I am going to propose to you to leap into some abyss; the custom of which I speak is a nothing—a mere trifle."

"And what may this trifle be?" I inquired.

"You must change your dress," said the master.

"To that of a secular? yes, without the slightest hesitation."

"To that of a secular? how came you for one moment to entertain such an idea?—chase this profane thought from your heart."

"How then am I to clothe myself?"

"As I do."

"As a monk?—you are jesting," I replied.

"No, my son, I am not jesting—I speak



seriously. This is an obligation which our blessed founders have thought fit to impose on us. And, after all, the change you are called upon to make is but a slight one; you have submitted to the greater change, surely you cannot object to the lesser one. The dress which is being prepared for you differs only in colour from that you are wearing. You are now clothed entirely in white; the new habit will be of black and white."

"But, Father, I have heard rules, constitutions, and statutes spoken of for a year, and have not yet been permitted to read them—why, I know not."

"Well, my son, they shall be given to you to read. In the meantime, obey; nor think that this obedience will be without fruit to you; for, by assuming the monastic habit, you acquire a right to greater liberty."

Let him who has a warm heart, and who has ever nourished sentiments of reasonable independence, imagine what an effect this magic word, *liberty*, was calculated to produce on me. My blood tingled, the colour rushed to my cheeks, a thousand thoughts flitted across my mind, recollections of the past crowded upon my imagination, and hope for the future rekindled in my bosom. Liberty was, I felt, a balm for all my wounds, and in a transport of joy, I exclaimed—"Shall I then be free? shall I be permitted to walk out alone?" and I was preparing myself to

enumerate a list of joys, which I conceived this word liberty to comprehend, when the monk interrupted me with

"Oh no."

"Then, in what does that liberty you promise me consist? If nothing is to be gained by it, I will not change my dress; it is better that I should remain as I am."

"Young man, you go on too fast—the liberty of going out alone will one day be acceded to you, but not at present; we must proceed by degrees. You will now be permitted the pleasure of returning home occasionally, for a few hours, accompanied by me, or by any other person whom the Superior may think proper to appoint; besides which you will be allowed to receive the visits of your relations once a month. And to conclude, this change of dress authorizes you to commence the study of philosophy."

Although the monk's tart "Oh no" had hurled me from a heaven of light to a chaos of darkness, yet the promise that I should see my parents shed around me a ray of hope, and I exclaimed—"Well, upon condition that I shall return to my paternal home, that I shall once more embrace my parents and friends, I am ready. Where is the dress?"

"My son," replied the father, "there are certain formalities attending the assuming of the dress; it will be necessary to bless the tunic, and to go through an appropriate cere-



mony in the church—but it is merely a ceremony; and you must also sign a paper, called a ‘*deed of humility.*’ ”

Accustomed as I had been from infancy, to a strict mode of speaking, I understood this word humility in its usual sense, as implying an internal conviction of our own nothingness, and of the insignificance of all human powers, and therefore did not ask for any further information respecting this deed, but at once shewed myself disposed to do all that was required.

The monk, rejoicing in his easy triumph, tapped me caressingly on the shoulder, saying, “To-morrow you shall sign this deed, and you must then immediately enter on the ‘*Holy Exercises.*’ ” (A penance of fifteen days, during which, far removed from all accustomed occupations, the person gives himself up to meditation, passing from the reading of serious books to prayer, and from prayer to other devotional practices, according to the example of Ignazio Lojola, who pretended to have had a revelation from the Virgin with regard to the duties to be observed.)

“How long will it be before I see my family?”

“After fifteen days of ‘*Holy Exercises,*’ you will assume the habit, and be permitted to go home.”

The anxiety that I felt to behold again

those faces so dear, so familiar to me—to unburden my griefs to my parents, and to ask their counsel and aid—for my mind was filled with doubts and fears, made every hour appear an age.

The following morning the master came to conduct me to his apartment. There I found the Signor Ciccolini, a public notary of the Court of Rome, the Signor Baini, and two other gentlemen who were unknown to me. The notary, after having written the usual preliminary formula, turning towards me, interrogated me thus—

“Are you, Signor D. R. Ciocci, willing to assume the habit of a monk?”

“I am willing.”

“Are you willing to give up all that belongs to you?”

“I am.”

“But reflect well—do not allow yourself to be carried away by your fervour. You may, without scruple, make some little reserve to supply your wants.”

“What wants? Have I not parents who will supply all I need?”

“Very good—but your parents will not live for ever.”

“I know it; but when it shall please God to call them to himself, shall I not succeed to their property? My eldest brother is married, and has an establishment of his own,—my brother the priest cannot marry,—of my



sisters, one is married, and one is a nun ; they have each received their fortunes,—the third, who is very young, will at the appointed time receive her portion,—and I also shall myself succeed to a portion of the paternal property.”

“Pardon me, Signor Ciocci,” resumed the notary, “but in this statement you manifestly contradict yourself. You declared, a few minutes since, your willingness to renounce all that you possessed, and you now say that, at the death of your father, you shall have property of your own. I do not understand you—explain yourself, if you please, more clearly.”

I was silent for two or three minutes, not knowing how to extricate my thoughts from the labyrinth into which the serious remonstrance of the notary had thrown me. I knew not what to think of this “*deed of humility*.” A thousand misgivings filled my mind, and hoping to receive from him an explanation that would assist me in fully comprehending its intention, I anxiously broke silence with—

“I must request, Sir, that you will inform me what is expected from me. Tell me what is this deed, whether it be really a mere form, as has been represented to me, or if” . . . Here the master arose, and in an imperious tone interrupted me, saying—

“Do not be obstinate and rebellious, but

obey. I have already told you that, when you have assumed the habit of the Order, the chapter ‘*de humilitate*,’ shall be explained to you, according to the rule of St. Benedict. In this paper you have only to make a renunciation of all you possess on earth.”

“Of all I possess ? And if I renounce all, who, when I leave the College, will provide for me ?”

The notary now interposed. “That,” said he, “is the point to which I wish to call your attention, in advising you to make some reservation. If you neglect doing so, you may find yourself in difficulties, losing, as you irrevocably will, every right to your own.”

At these words, so palpable, so glaring, the bandage fell from my eyes, and I saw the abyss these monsters were opening under my feet. “This is a deception, a horrible deception,” I exclaimed ; “I now understand the intention of this ‘*deed of humility*,’ but I protest that I will not sign it, and that I will have nothing more to do with it.”

The state of my feelings at this moment, may be more easily imagined than described. Horror at the sight of the danger into which I had been running with so much confidence—repugnance to the monastic life—indignation at the insidious manner in which they had endeavoured to draw from my lips an assent to an irrevocable misfortune—added to a naturally impetuous disposition, completely



mastered me. I broke out into bitter expressions of irony and reproach, directed now against the notary, now against the witnesses—calling them villains, deceivers, men destitute of religion and charity. At this moment my passion knew no bounds. I was reckless of what I uttered, and set them all at defiance. The notary Ciccolini sat astonished, the witnesses were pale and mute, and the master threatened, hoping to subdue my impetuosity, and check my resentment, by thundering in my ears menaces of penance, deprivation of food, and imprisonment; but his efforts were useless. These inflictions appeared to me as nothing in comparison with the danger I had escaped. I returned to my room, and feeling the full force of my melancholy situation, I burst into tears.

After spending two or three hours in bitterness and woe, I resolved to have recourse to my family, and implore their succour. For this purpose I wrote a long letter to my mother, in which, after having exposed all the miseries of my heart, and related what had taken place with regard to the "*deed of humility*," I begged of her to give me consolation and advice. I gave the letter into the hands of a servant, and, on the following morning, received a reply, in which I was told, in gentle terms, to be tranquil—not to resist the wishes of my directors—to clothe myself as they pleased, and to sign unhesi-

tatingly any paper that might be required; for when my studies were completed, and I quitted the College, the validity of these forms would cease. This letter set all my doubts at rest, and restored peace to my mind—it was written by my mother, and she, I felt assured, would never deceive me. How could I, for one moment, imagine that this epistle was an invention of my enemies, who had imitated the hand-writing and affectionate style of my mother? Some persons will say, you might have suspected it after the warning given you by your friend Appollonj. I reply, that in the uprightness of my own heart, I could not conceive such atrocious wickedness—it appeared utterly irreconcilable with the sanctity of the place, and with the venerable hoariness of persons dedicated to God. Besides which, in the perturbed and desolate state of my feelings, I had absolute need of relief; and, casting about on all sides for consolation, I was prepared to seize with avidity the first support that came to hand. The philosophical proverb, "What is desired is easily believed," is a very true, as well as a very ancient one.

After perusing the letter, I hastened to the master, declaring my readiness to sign the *deed of humility*; he smiled approvingly on finding how well his plan had succeeded. The notary and witnesses were again summoned, and my condemnation was written. The good



notary, however, pitying my situation, inserted the following exceptional clause to the total relinquishment of my rights, viz., should the monastery be suppressed, I was to be at liberty to return home, and to enjoy a small annuity for the remainder of my life. It was specified that my parents were to support me till I had terminated my studies, and at my death the whole of my property was to revert to the monastery. A chill crept over my frame as I heard these words pronounced ; at the same time, so outraged were my feelings, that, in order to prevent a repetition of the scene of the other day, I kept constantly repeating to myself, "This is only a form, and at the completion of my studies this deed will be cancelled."

No sooner was this business completed than the master commanded me to write to my parents, to inform them that I had signed the deed of renunciation, and was willing, for the benefit of my soul, to assume the monkish habit. He was present when I wrote this letter ; I was, therefore, obliged to adopt the phrases suggested by him—phrases breathing zeal and devotion, full of indifference to the world, and tranquil satisfaction to the choice which I had made. My parents, thought I, will be astonished when they read this epistle ; but, however, they must easily perceive that the language is not mine, so little is it in accordance with my former style of writing.

Reader, in the course of thirteen months, one only, of from fifty to sixty letters which I had addressed to my mother, was ever received by her, and that one was this very letter. The monks, instead of forwarding mine, had forged letters, imitating the handwriting, and adopting a style suited to their purpose ; and instead of consigning to me the genuine replies, in which, probably, my parents might express their pleasure and satisfaction at the change that had taken place in my sentiments, they artfully substituted answers of their own fabrication. My family, therefore, were not surprised at the tenor of this epistle, but looked upon it as a confirmation of the salutary and extraordinary change which they had every reason to suppose had been gradually working its way in my soul. They rejoiced over these false epistles, replete with fervent expressions, and reputed me already a Saint. They probably pictured me to themselves, on some future day, with a mitre on my head, with the red cap,—nay, perhaps, even wearing the triple crown. Oh, what a delusion ! Poor deceived parents ! You knew not that your son, in anguish and despair, was clashing his chains, and devouring his tears in secret ; that a triple bandage was placed before his eyes, and that he was being dragged, an unwilling victim, to the sacrifice !

I was, as had been announced to me, shut up for fifteen days, in solitude in my room, in



order that I might devote myself entirely to religious exercises. After ten days of rigorous confinement—for even my food was brought to my chamber—I became ill—my feet swelled—I was oppressed with nausea, and constant pain in the head—if I attempted to walk, after taking a few turns, I grew dizzy, and was compelled to throw myself upon the bed; and it frequently happened, that being unable to reach it, I fell fainting to the ground; but no one came to my assistance. These indispositions were, no doubt, the effect of want of light, and air, and exercise.

At length the time of probation was passed, and the day had arrived for publicly consecrating the habit. The time appointed was the second of February, the festival of the Purification of the Virgin, commonly called Candlemas-day. This festival takes its name from its being the day on which holy candles are distributed to the people. Three hours previous to the time appointed for the ceremony, the master, accompanied by the barber of the monastery, entered my apartment. The barber proceeded to place upon the table razors, scissors, and all things requisite for shaving and for cutting hair. I remained immovable, looking with stupor on this strange preparation, when the barber turning towards me, inquired—

“Are you ready, Sir?”

“What!” I answered, “Are you going to shave me? Do you not perceive that I have no beard on my chin? And my hair is quite short; it was cut but a few days ago.”

Here the master observed, “My son, you are not going to be shaved, but it is necessary that the tonsure should be made. This is a formality inseparable from the adoption of the habit—in consenting to the one, you have agreed to the other.”

On hearing this reasoning, I repeated to myself the illusive phrase which had so often calmed and re-assured me, “When I shall have finished my studies all these formalities will be as nothing,” and silently sat down. To form the tonsure of the Benedictines, the hair is shaved off in a circle about the width of a finger; commencing from the temples, it passes behind the ears and surrounds the head, leaving the hair on the crown. It differs from the tonsure of the friars inasmuch as they shave all the upper part of the head, leaving only a small circle of hair, where the former shave off theirs.

At the first touch of the razor I felt the fire kindling within me, and, filled with indignation, I glided from the hands of the barber. My aversion to wearing the appearance of a monk got the better of me, and I loudly protested that I would not submit to these forms.

The master, with the hope of reducing me to subjection, pronounced these magic words,



"Very well, I shall argue the point no longer—the ceremony will not take place, and I must proceed to inform your parents, brothers, and sisters, who, with many other friends, are now waiting your arrival in the church, where they are assembled to witness your assuming the habit of the Order, that you refuse to present yourself."

"Are, then, my parents really in the church? Can I see them? Can I speak with them?" I eagerly inquired.

"Yes, you will see them all if you quietly submit to this necessary form: but you must not speak to them now. A greater pleasure awaits you—before the expiration of a week you will be permitted to visit them at your home."

"Do with me then as you please," said I, and covering my face with a handkerchief, I again sat down. In less than three minutes the masterly hand of the barber had stamped upon my head the sign of death to the world.

At ten o'clock two monks came to my room; they placed themselves one on either side, and conducted me to the end of the corridor, where I found my fellow-victim, Don Cherubino Ceseri, of whom I have already spoken, and who had been drawn into the snare by the same insidious arts as myself. We advanced together, under the escort of the two monks, towards the staircase leading to the church: here we found our companions,

who had professed five days previously, drawn up in double file, and with them all the monks. Two and two then entered the church, we unfortunate beings, attended by four masters, closing the procession. I felt as though I was marching to the guillotine, and shrunk from the idea of appearing in public with the detested sign on my head.

On entering the church I raised my eyes, and beheld it crowded with spectators, many of whom I recognised as my former acquaintance. Seats were ranged in a circle round the High Altar, and upon these my executioners placed themselves, as if to separate me from the people, and present an obstacle to my being snatched away from them. We two, clothed in white, stood in the midst. We were commanded to kneel before the altar, while the bishop, Tassini, and other assistant monks, repeated certain prayers. This done, we were made to extend ourselves upon the earth as dead, with our faces to the ground, while they sung over us the psalm, "*Miserere*," at the same time the bells of the monastery, with a funereal sound, announced our death without. Had these bells been gifted with speech, they would have proclaimed aloud the conflicting struggles of unwilling victims, and have cried out "Murder!"

At intervals, during this mournful ceremony, exclamations of pity reached my ears,



especially from that side of the church appropriated to the assembled ladies, who occasionally exhibited much emotion. God has endued women with a sense of compassion far more exquisite than that of man; and my strangely altered appearance, worn out as I was with conflicting feelings, brought to me a share of their sympathy.

At the expiration of half an hour, the psalm being ended, we were made to sit down, and the Bishop Tassini addressed to us a discourse, which lasted nearly two hours. I cannot take upon myself fully to explain the subject of this very long sermon; but from time to time, a word more odious than the rest, rousing me from the sweet yet mournful ecstasy into which the presence of my mother and family had thrown me, rendered me conscious that he was expatiating on the merits of monkhood. The tears of my mother and sisters were a mystery to me. Why? thought I, why, if this ceremony be a mere form, do they weep for me? At length the sermon was brought to a conclusion, and the spectators withdrew. O how many expressive looks spoke farewell!

There was a grand dinner after the ceremony, at which my brother the priest was a guest. Agitated by a thousand painful reflections, I could not eat, and was most desirous of speaking alone with him. No opportunity

of doing so was permitted; but to my great joy arrangements were made for my returning home on the following Monday.

The change that my dress had undergone was very slight. The scapulary, hood, and sash were now black, and to these was added a small cloak of black prunella. Whenever the Pope honoured us with a visit, or whenever we went, either to his palace, or the Church of St. Peter, we were required to wear the *cocola*, which is a black vest descending to the feet, the sleeves of which reach the ground.

The long wished for Monday at length arrived, and I was accompanied to my home by the master of the novices. Although the horses conveyed us at a rapid pace, the distance appeared to me interminable. I had no sooner entered the house than I rushed to my mother's apartment, leaving the master alone, notwithstanding I had been forbidden to quit his presence for a moment. After the first exchange of embraces and affectionate inquiries, I anxiously said,

"Relieve me, for pity's sake, from a doubt that weighs horribly on my mind—tell me, have you received my letters during the time I have been in the college?"

"Yes, all, my son," replied my mother, "and can produce them." "And we, too, have ours," said my sisters, who were present.

They produced the letters. I hastily



opened several addresses to my mother, and on finding them to contain sentiments never expressed, nor even thought of by me, I uttered a cry of distress, exclaiming—"Ah, how have I been deceived!!"

"Why? how? what do you mean?" they all inquired in astonishment.

"O unhappy me! God is witness that I have written none of these letters."

"Written none of these letters? Impossible!—how can that be?"

"No, not one. *They are not mine, they are forgeries of the masters,*" I declared.

"Then," inquired my mother, in alarm, "tell me . . . Your profession."

"I have been entrapped into it. It was not my desire to become a monk—rather do I abominate and detest those monsters."

"Silence, my son," added my distressed mother, "the master is near, and may hear you—worse may befall you."

Thus was the joy I had pictured to myself in returning to my family changed into sorrow and weeping. My mother and sisters stood pale and agitated; and I, crushed beneath the weight of accumulated misfortunes, a prey to grief bordering on distraction. The master was waiting to re-conduct me to the College, but I positively refused ever again to return to my deceivers. The whole of my family were equally strenuous in their endeavours to soften my resentment, and to persuade me

to relinquish the opposition I meditated. But how different were the tender solicitations of my mother and sisters, to the imperious tones of my brother, the priest; the former, notwithstanding their efforts to conceal their feelings, betrayed sincere grief—honest compassion; but he insulting, as it were, my resentment, spoke to me of duty, and even commanded my obedience. The manner at once convinced me that there was a mutual understanding between himself and my persecutors.

After a long struggle and continued resistance, my mother, calling me into another room, with a tone of strong emotion, yet authority, thus addressed me:—"You have confidence in me, my son, you cannot doubt the sincerity of my maternal affection, listen then to my advice, and do not persist in refusing to comply with the regulations of your college, but return quietly with the master. You now have justice to advocate your cause, but you will lose this advantage in the eyes of the public by acting intemperately. The best results will proceed from mature deliberation, and, at the present moment, neither you nor I am in a state to consider the subject. The canonical law has, I know, provided for similar cases; your father assures me that he will exert himself to the utmost to remedy this terrible mistake by appealing to the Holy Congregation of Bishops and Regulars; and



when we shall have obtained from them a declaration of the nullity of the vows pronounced by you, you will return free to your home, without creating a disturbance, as useless as it would be prejudicial. Confide wholly in me who am your mother, and who can enter into all your feelings—think you that my heart is less anguished than your own?" These kind words were as a ray of light upon my clouded soul. I embraced my mother, blessing her, and conjuring her to leave no means untried to restore me to liberty, for, otherwise, despair might drive me to violence.

What were my feelings when I again entered the detested walls of my prison? If, until this time, considering them merely as a retreat for a short period, I had looked upon them as a child looks upon the rod of its master, I now indeed beheld them with the horror, chill, and anguish of the condemned, viewing the fatal axe which lies glittering on the funereal scaffold. Those bright visions of the future which, in moments of idleness, had floated through my brain, now came before me in altered shapes—like spectres rising from the tomb, they seemed, with a smile of derision, to mock me, saying, "Perish, perish, with us!" And such indeed appeared to be my destiny; for, once again in the hands of my enemies, they did not fail to show their resentment by inflicting on me the severest punishment. For three days I was confined

to my room and kept upon bread and water. I was forbidden ever again to return home, prohibited from writing to any person whatever, and told that I was always to receive the visits of my friends in the presence of a master, with a threat amounting almost to annihilation, if I ever uttered a word that might lead any one to suspect I was dissatisfied with my situation.

The three days' solitude to which I was condemned in the agitated state of my feelings, writhing under the discovery of the cruel deception of which I had become a victim, and which had forced me on to a step that might prove irrevocable, almost distracted me. I had, during this confinement, ample time for reflection, but not one sustaining hope brought comfort to my soul. Now and then the thought of God would flash upon my mind, like the polar star upon the gaze of a tempest-tossed seaman, but instantly it was lost behind the thick clouds of impenetrable darkness, with which the Romish religion has clothed the God of mercies. Educated to look upon Him as a God of terror, rather than of love—ready to hurl to the nethermost pit all who dared to oppose their will to the dispensations of the Church, what hope was left to me of finding shelter beneath his wings? Meditation served but to thicken the clouds of my spirit, and to embitter the balm which an occasional gleam of divine intelli-



gence shot into my soul ; clipping the wings of hope, it plunged me yet deeper into despair. I was upon the rocks of Gilboa, cursed by God, upon which no herbage ever springs, and where the fertilizing dews of morning never descend. Three days of almost total abstinence—my only sustenance being a morsel of bread and a little water—added physical debility to mental suffering, and brought on an indisposition to sleep, which was the more intolerable that it prolonged the sense of my sorrowful existence. When, for a few minutes, exhausted nature triumphed, my dreams were such as may be supposed to disturb the sleeping hours of one occupied with the single idea of terror. My prayers were weak, not the sisters of hope, not founded upon that faith which moves mountains. I prayed because I felt the need of prayer, because I was accustomed to it ; but a voice continually repeated to me, “God does not listen to thee, for thy prayers are not in accordance with his will.”

From this period may I date the commencement of the work of grace in my heart. Experiencing in the unhappy yearnings of a troubled spirit, the need of a sustaining power, I looked in vain to the Romish religion for a staff whereon to find support. It was diametrically opposed to every natural feeling of my heart, and presented to me no relief. Where was my troubled soul to cast anchor,

and to what source was I to flee for comfort ? By prayer, I sought the aid of God, and a gleam of sunshine illumined my path. Is it, thought I, is it a truth that, in order to serve him faithfully, God requires us to sacrifice the best feelings of our heart, and to stifle every social affection of our nature ? or are these doctrines the invention of man ? I was lost in conjecture, and tormented with surmises, hopes, and fears ; but how was I to extricate myself from this labyrinth ? The moment was not far distant which a compassionate God had established as the limit of my suffering ; though I had yet a long journey to perform among the thorns and briers set in my path by the opposition of the monks.

When released from my penance chamber, I applied myself assiduously to the study of philosophy. Being anxiously desirous to comprehend more perfectly the spirit of the religion in which I had been reared, I devoted those hours that I could spare from the duties of the school, entirely to reading the History of the Popes, Muratori's Annals of Italy, and the Councils. These books, which contain the few truths that her vigilant governors allow the people of Italy to read, through the blessing of God, shot a second ray of light into my benighted soul. Here I observed that pride, thirst for dominion, cupidity of riches, and easy and voluptuous living, had in every age been the main-springs of action to



the Church of Rome. A disgust was roused in my heart by this discovery, which infinitely diminished the respect and reverence that I had hitherto entertained for her.

With such occupations the days passed less cheerlessly, and I anxiously looked forward to the termination of my studies, that I might, agreeably to my mother's suggestions, have recourse to the Holy Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for a dispensation from my vow. The society of the twenty-four youths, with whom I again associated, also contributed to soften the austerity of a life that was none of my choice. There were even moments when I forgot my miseries; but a glance at the habit in which I was clothed, too soon, alas! recalled me to myself, and the dreadful realities of my situation would rush to my mind with redoubled force.

At the end of six months, I was seized with a slow fever, which, for three months, confined me to my room. The physicians pronounced my disease to be consumption. I, at this time, became acquainted with Dr. Riccardi, a most kind and excellent man, who was unremitting in his attentions towards me during the whole of my lingering illness, and of whom I now speak with warm feelings of gratitude. To him I opened the sorrows of my heart, and spoke to him unreservedly of my aversion to the monastic state. He sympathized in my feelings, and, during our con-

versation one day, observed, "I have attended in this monastery for ten years, and also in many other religious houses, and in all I discover youths who, like you, have been lamentably deceived; I hear the same complaints, I am called upon to cure the same disease, and oh! in how many instances have I known it to prove fatal!" After the third month the complaint gave place to a tedious convalescence, which, however, brought with it the most pleasing results, as it opened to me the means of communicating with my friends. In consideration of my weak state of health, I was allowed rather more liberty, being permitted to go alone into the sacristy, and to walk, when I pleased, in the corridor of the monks. One day, as I was thoughtfully pacing the corridor, I was met by the sacristan, who, after looking around to ascertain that he was not likely to be overheard, said, in an under tone—

"Sir, if you will promise not to betray me, I will undertake an embassy which will bring you great pleasure."

"Do not doubt me," I replied, "but speak instantly."

Drawing from his pocket a small packet of letters, he presented it to me, saying, "These are for you; answer them at your leisure; and to prevent all possibility of discovery place your replies in the cover of the Breviary in the choir."



I found the packet to contain letters from my mother, and from other dear friends who sought to console me under my misfortune. My mother repeated her assurance that every exertion should be made to release me from my vow, and restore me to my family. This was no slight consolation, but the God of mercies was preparing for me another joy, which should fulfil the desire of my heart by shedding upon it the light of truth.

In the monastery of "the Holy Cross of Jerusalem," in the *Campi Sessoriani*, resided all the aged men of our order. We sometimes went there for the purpose of visiting the library, which is one of the richest in Rome, especially in manuscripts. The librarian, D. Alberico Amatori, a very learned and pious monk, showed for me a flattering preference, and often took occasion to engage me in conversation on religious topics. I listened with emotion to his commendation of the Holy Scriptures as the only fundamental book of faith. I had never read the Bible excepting in small portions inserted in the Breviary, or sung during mass. Most ardently did I long to peruse this book, prompted by a strong desire to understand the goodness of a God who had condescended to speak to men on earth, and to reveal to them the hidden counsels of his wisdom. My desire increased as his praises of the holy lives of the ancient Christians, and especially

of the first monks, became more frequent and more emphatic. "In the early ages," said he, "the only book of the faithful was the Holy Scriptures. St. Jerome, exhorting those of his own time, inculcates the practice of constantly reading and meditating upon its precious contents; recommending even, that the Christian should allow himself to be surprised by sleep in this holy occupation, and that his cheek should repose on the pages of the sacred volume. Then the Church was all fervour, but now—how changed! The reason of this fading away is but too apparent. The Bible is become a book almost disused. Who reads it? Here and there a priest or monk may be found, who hurriedly repeats a few scattered fragments, a few mutilated psalms; and that is all. Instead of the homilies of the fathers, and the lives of the saints, how much better would it be to devote oneself entirely to the constant reading and meditation of the law of God, which is the only book that contains the word of eternal life." He conversed in this strain for some time, and blessed were his words to me.

I listened to this good man with fervour and attention, and he, observing the earnestness of my manner, thought proper to put me in possession of a plan he had conceived for working a reform in the order, but for-



bade me to impart his secret. The change was to be effected by simply adopting the Bible alone as the rule of faith. I willingly subscribed to his project, with fourteen others, who had already given their names.

D. Alberico, in the simplicity of his heart, and in the rectitude of his intentions, did not hesitate to present himself to the General, D. Nivardo Tassini, and explaining to him his sentiments, he asked permission to retire to some monastery, with fifteen others, who entertained the same opinions, for the purpose of living in the perfect observance of the proposed rule. His proposition was considered a scandalous and unpardonable offence; and we were all denounced before the Holy Congregation as heretics and apostates, aiming at the destruction of our order.

The grossest calumnies were instantly fabricated against this man of God. On being summoned before the tribunal, and commanded to lay open his plans, he produced a long exposition, setting forth his views in the plainest and simplest forms, to which we had all subscribed. After a brief examination, it was thought advisable to impose silence on the parties; probably as the best method to avoid giving publicity to the affair, which might have attracted other disciples. They knew not how to condemn the pious device of a monk, who aimed at reinstating the

Bible in its former position; for the Romish Church recognises the Scriptures, notwithstanding she places above them human fantasies which she pronounces infallible.

The General, in the meantime, in order to crush the design, deemed it expedient to put in practice the celebrated maxim, "*Divide et impera.*" The monk Stramucci was sent to the monastery of San Severino nelle Marche; where, owing to the insalubrity of the situation, or from some other cause, in the course of a few months he was from a robust man reduced to a skeleton. D. Andrea Gigli, curate in the monastery of Chiaravalle, was called to Rome. He was then in the enjoyment of excellent health, but in a short time his appearance was strangely altered, and after gradually sinking for two months, he was one morning found in his bed a corpse. We were in the same college, and I was an eye-witness to the fact. D. Eugenio Ghioni remained in Rome, but after four months he also sunk into his tomb at the age of thirty-one. D. Mariano Gabrielli, who was in the flower of youth, was, in the same manner, gradually declining for six months, and then, like the former one, died of what was called consumption. The Abbot Bucciarelli, a man of herculean stature, slept with his fathers after an illness of only three days. The Abbot Berti, was, after two months, attacked by a slow fever, and ex-



pired after ten days' illness. D. A. Baldini, at the expiration of thirty-four days, was seized with violent spasms and inflammation, and went to rejoin in heaven those martyrs who had preceded him. The other six, through a special interposition of Providence, escaped death; but all had to sustain for many months a dangerous struggle with this last enemy. Only D. Alberico and myself remained untouched by this *mysterious agency*, but we lived in daily expectation of sharing the same fate.

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### THIRD YEAR.

To the tragical narration of so many deaths of which iniquity was the minister, I must add an account of the melancholy end of D. Pacifico Bartocci, the master of the novices, which took place at the commencement of this year. As he was crossing an open court in the interior of the monastery, a stone, from an unknown hand, struck him on his left temple and felled him to the ground. At the expiration of ten days he expired, without having uttered a single word since the moment of the accident. This man it was who had been the principal contriver of the numerous deceptions employed to draw me into the net, and his death was an

event that contributed not a little to diminish my sufferings. I had no longer a mastiff chained to my side, ready at every moment to fix his teeth in me.

D. P. Bartocci was succeeded in his office by the Prior D. Candido Laurenzi, a noble Perugian; a man of kind disposition and lively humour, and one who showed me much compassion. He encouraged me when I was cast down, consoled me when afflicted; and sometimes I could perceive a tear in his eye when I spoke to him of the repugnance that I felt to a kind of life to which I was not called by God. Still, though my condition was ameliorated, no way of escape as yet presented itself.

D. Alberico Amatori, who was upon terms of great intimacy with the master, continued to come occasionally to the monastery of San Bernardo, but he was not, as before, permitted to converse with me freely. One day he found, by chance, in the apartment of the master, one of my young companions, to whom he gave a New Testament in the Latin tongue, which had been printed in Paris. It was very small and elegantly bound. I saw the good youth with this book constantly in his hand, and frequently asked him to lend it me to read; he always gave it willingly, but soon requested to have it returned, seeming as though he could not live without the precious volume, and watching it as jealously



as a miser his treasure. The high opinion which I had entertained for the Bible ever since the commencement of my acquaintance with D. Alberico, its engrossing influence on my young friend, and the peace which the small portions that I had opportunities of reading instilled into my mind, combined in awakening in me a strong desire to possess this book, and I wrote to D. Alberico, begging of him to provide me with a copy. This best of friends not only furnished me with a Bible, but also procured for me other useful books, among which were the commentaries of the holy fathers, translated from the French. The difficulty was, how to bring them into the monastery unobserved. He at length succeeded in securing the aid of my servant, who, one evening, while we were at supper, secretly carried the books into my room, and concealed them under the bed. I was asleep when he entered my chamber to inform me of what had been done, and to deliver a note from my friend; but quickly rousing myself, I at once proceeded, with his assistance, to deposit this dangerous and contraband article between the mattress and the bedstead. This precaution relieved me from all fear of discovery; for none, excepting the servant, ever touched my bed, and he was doubly bound to inviolable secrecy.

In my leisure hours I shut myself in my

room, and read with avidity the book I had so ardently coveted—the book which contained the light that was to chase away the clouds from my intellect, and reveal to me the real attributes of God. I found in its perusal a satisfaction I had never before experienced; contrary to my usual impressions from oft-read books, those produced in a recurrence to the word of God were ever new. The more I drank at this fountain the stronger was my desire to apply my lips to it. Frequently during the time I was engaged in studying the sacred volume some one would rap at my door. To conceal the Bible under the wardrobe, to take up the life of some saint, and with composure to open the door, was the work of a moment. Nor let any one here sarcastically remark that I would insinuate the imposition of restrictions that do not exist. Antichrist has not, it is true, ventured so far as to prohibit the reading of the Holy Scriptures. He is too politic to adopt a measure that might rouse the slumbering apathy of the multitude, and therefore contents himself with guarding the perusal of this precious book with the eye of an Argus. If the Bible is not now prohibited, as at the time of the Council of Tolosa, held in A.D. 1229, the use of it is sought to be limited to the initiated alone; and to all who are unacquainted with the Latin tongue it is as a sealed book. The circumstance of



my having subscribed to the project of Amatori, which was looked upon as a dangerous heresy, would alone have caused my reading of the Bible to (have) been regarded as a heinous offence, proving that I was still clinging to his heretical opinions. It was not, therefore, without sufficient reason that I endeavoured to avoid being surprised in such an occupation.

I reaped great benefit and much enlightenment from constantly searching the Gospels. I had believed that "*confession*" was inculcated in the Bible as a sacrament, and sought anxiously for some account of this rite; turning over the pages, I read and re-read, but all to no purpose. I believed in the doctrine of "*transubstantiation*"—what was my astonishment as I read and pondered over the words used by the Redeemer at the institution of the sacrament of the Eucharist, "*Hoc quoties-cumque feceritis, in meam memoriam facietis.*" "Do this, as oft as ye shall do it, in remembrance of me." If Jesus Christ had said that which the Romish Church would make him say,—namely,—“This is my real body, this is my real blood, in this sacrament I am really present under the form of bread and wine,” how could he have said, Remember me? The apostles could have reproached their Master with the inutility of his injunction. What man, whose friend should say to him, “When I am present remember me,”

would not be struck with the absurdity of the command? The 54th, 55th, 56th, 57th verses of the sixth chapter of St. John were texts calculated to stagger me. “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. Whoso eateth my flesh and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life. . . . For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me and I in him.” But does not Christ himself inform us in the context how these mysterious words are to be understood? when he says, “It is the spirit that quickeneth, the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.” I argued,—then Christ, in speaking of his flesh and blood, speaks of it in a sense entirely spiritual. If Christ spoke of his most holy body, of his most precious blood, of his soul, and of the Divine Person in the holy mystery as really present, could he have said, “the flesh profiteth nothing?” He spoke, perhaps, figuratively, according to the Eastern style, suited to the multitude who listened to him. Did those who heard him understand his words in a real and material sense? Perhaps so. They might understand them precisely as the Romanists receive them, but even then there exists this difference—the persons addressed understood the words simply, and without reference to the Eucharist; whereas



the Romanists, on these words, found the sophistry of the '*bodily presence*' in the sacrament. These, and similar reflections upon the texts, removed my doubts, and I saw in the sacrament of the Eucharist no other than the visible sign of an inward and spiritual grace, as in Baptism. Guided by the Spirit of God, I strictly examined other points; for instance, that of '*purgatory*' and '*indulgence*,' and in this last merchandise I at once recognised human coinage.

I was now internally a Protestant, and that hatred against the true Christians with which the Jesuits had inspired me was suddenly converted into the bond of charity. He who permitted to be open to me the way of conviction, had, in the illuminated book of salvation, forbidden me to hate those blinded beings, seated under the shadow of death in the Romish religion. I hated them not—I pitied them—but, as the sequel will show, I had incurred their suspicion, and the consequences to me were bitter.

Towards the middle of this year, I was one evening after supper seized with frightful spasms in the stomach. A burning heat in the chest and throat, which kept rapidly increasing, led me to suspect the cause of this sudden illness. In a short time I became of a livid colour, and foamed at the mouth. On seeing around me the monks, who had hastened to my cries, I turned towards them,

exclaiming, "You have your revenge! Death will soon terminate my miseries; but I esteem you less cruel in treating me thus, than in having sacrificed me by deception!" None of the remedies administered afforded me the slightest relief. All my companions were affected to tears at the sight of my sufferings. "My mother! my mother!" I exclaimed, "let me, I entreat you, see her once again before I die; . . . and my father, my brothers, my sisters, let me embrace them all!" The most sympathizing of those around me strove, by every means in their power, to calm and console me; seeing that the paroxysms increased, they became alarmed for my reason, and fearing lest in an agony of despair I might attempt my own life, they removed from my room every object which could be made use of for that purpose! But, alas! other torments awaited me. The master asked me if I would confess, and pressed it upon me as a duty. I replied, that my faults were known to God, and before him I confessed my nothingness, my sinfulness, but not to man. Instantly I heard a murmur of horror; some exclaimed, "Blasphemy!" others, "Heresy, heresy!" and many, "Poor fellow, his sufferings have deprived him of his senses!" The Superior thought it expedient to represent that I was possessed by a legion of demons. No sooner was this opinion expressed than the most



superstitious ran in haste to the church, and returned loaded with Romish merchandise, *the vase of holy water, Agnus Dei, blessed chaplet in articulo mortis, images, relics*. One sprinkled me on one side, another on the other. Some presented me with images, others placed relics on my forehead, and by the Superior I was "*exorcised*." The greater their exertions to grapple with the evil one, the stronger were the evidences of "*possession*."

Of all the relics presented to me, the one they looked upon with most faith was that of St. Peter the Martyr. Although I had not entirely rejected the adoration of saints, St. Peter of Verona, called the martyr, I especially abhorred. This saint, the finest fruit of the Dominican tree, was an inquisitor, who, for having subjected a province to fire and sword, pretending to teach the way to heaven by the light of funeral piles, fell a victim to the just vengeance of a persecuted people. I never had entertained the slightest sympathy for him, and now, after having studied the Gospel, how could I believe that it was in the power of a Pope to make a homicide enter heaven, when St. Paul, in the name of God, tells us, that "murderers shall not inherit the kingdom of heaven?" The Pope pretends that this power is included in the "*sana totum quodcunque ligaveris*." Imagine, benevolent readers, with what feel-

ings I must have beheld the bones of this blood-thirsty bigot offered to me as something celestial. With all my force I thrust aside the hand of the Superior, who presented the relic. He insisted upon my kissing it, esteeming it the most efficacious means whereby to chase the demon of blasphemy, which he said he perceived on my lips—the saint having been so zealous an exterminator of heresy.

Whilst these things were going on the physician arrived. His countenance was new to me. They told me that in consequence of the urgency of the case they had called in a doctor of the neighbourhood. He gave me a glass of medicine which he had brought with him, and I swallowed it with hope. A few minutes after, instead of being relieved, my pains became more intolerable, and the heat in my throat increased. I then insisted on their summoning the ordinary physician, who was, I knew, my friend. Dr. Riccardi came. Having inquired into the nature of the attack, he took from the table the phial that had contained the medicine I had swallowed, and having examined the few remaining drops, he shuddered, and with a mysterious and significant "Ah!" threw it out of the window, quickly preparing for me another medicine, which I drank in his presence. He then left, and a violent sickness brought me the wished-for relief. After three hours he returned,



and ordered that I should be placed in a hot bath, and from thence conveyed to a warm bed. This induced perspiration, which completed the happy change that the medicine had already produced; and, contrary to the expectations of my persecutors, I escaped from the jaws of death.

From this time the monks, as if to do away with any impression that they hated me, and to cancel as it were, the recollection of their vain attempt upon my life, exhibited towards me more humane and friendly feelings. They granted me the indulgence of taking occasional rides in the company of a Spanish master. Passing one day by the Via Gregoriana, the sight of a coat of arms, over the door of a house, which I knew to be those of the Hanoverian Ambassador, roused in me a strong desire which I had often before experienced, of conversing with some one, who, nourishing wholesome Christian principles, could enter into my feelings, and speak comfort to my soul. I at once signified to my companion my intention of seeking an interview with the Ambassador. He had been strictly charged not to allow me to speak with any one; but so earnest were my solicitations that he at length yielded. The reason for the Spaniard allowing himself to be persuaded into this breach of trust may be readily comprehended by all who are acquainted with the fact, that when the monks were swept

from Spain by the beneficent whirlwind which purged that land of them, they were hospitably received into our monastery. It was, therefore, their study to show themselves grateful for the benefit conferred on them, and they especially exhibited this feeling towards the young men, hoping, no doubt, by such means to secure to themselves support at a period when the old race should have given place to the new.

I presented myself to the Ambassador, leaving the Spaniard in the ante-chamber. Finding myself alone with him, I hastily proceeded to explain the cause of my visit, and fully disclosed the change which had taken place in my religious sentiments. He manifested great surprise at my communication, and embracing me with Christian fervour, spoke to me in the true spirit of religion. My object in this interview was not to seek aid to escape from the fangs of the religious and political tyranny under which Italy groans; I well knew that the charge with which the Ambassador was invested precluded all possibility of assistance from him. I was actuated solely by a desire to confide my secret to a sympathizing soul, and I merely narrate this occurrence in order that the Hanoverian Ambassador may be appealed to as an irrefragable witness to my having declared myself a Protestant in faith, four years before my arrival in England. I earnestly beg of



him to bear witness to this solemn truth, in praise of that God who alone was the author of my conversion.

The General was peremptory in denying me permission to return home ; but since, through a servant, a safe way was opened of sending to, and receiving genuine letters from, my family, his refusal caused me less pain. I could write what I pleased without the lynx eye of the monks being able to penetrate into every movement of my heart. With caution I related to my mother their barbarous attempt to poison me ; I described the dreadful suffering I had undergone, and expressed my fear that they would renew their attempt to get rid of me. She, in reply, exhorted me to patience, and repeated her promise, that at the end of the year every exertion should be made to procure my release.

Cheered by the anticipation of liberty, I was enabled patiently to support the austerities of the cloister, and my countenance wore an air of serenity, which drew the monks into the belief that my mind was at ease, and that I should now content myself with my present situation ; they therefore spoke to me of preparing myself for the priesthood. On two accounts I did not object to receive the four minor orders. In the first place, a refusal would only have exasperated my persecutors, and have given rise to fresh anger, to new

vexations—and they were now disposed to peace. In the second place, these minor orders were in no way binding, and therefore imposed no restraint on my will.

Notwithstanding I was persuaded beyond a doubt that the authority to preach was conferred on me by a Church in error, I availed myself of the permission with a certain degree of satisfaction as soon as I was invested with the orders. It was ordained that I should explain the Catechism to the youth of the parish, every Sunday. My sermons, however, always underwent the scrutiny of two masters, and I generally found whole pages crossed out with, “heretical proposition,” “condemned proposition,” “rash proposition,” written above, with quotations, now from the Council A, or from the Council B, from the Pope H, or from the Pope X. . . . Would that they had now and then cited the Bible.

The year was fast drawing to its close. The prospect of quitting the college was a balm for all my wounds. The light of the future reflected brilliantly on the present, and broke, in some degree, the darkness of the past. I spent hours in building castles in the air concerning my future life of liberty. My dreams were bright, my days were happy. The air that I breathed seemed to whisper, “I am free, and thou, ere long, wilt be free also.”



## FOURTH YEAR.

It sometimes happens that the traveller, lost in the darkness of the night, discovers in the distance a brilliant light, towards which he anxiously directs his steps with the hope of finding a human habitation; but notwithstanding all his efforts, the light still evades him, and at length, with bitter disappointment, he perceives that he had been diverted by an *Ignis Fatuus*. So was it with me. The prospect of returning to my family had been the bright star that had led me on, and cheered my sinking spirit, and now, alas! like the benighted traveller, was I doomed to find that I had been deluded by a phantom. Having permitted me to pass the first year of my incarceration in trifling occupations, under the belief that by gilding my chain they should fetter me the easier, they were prepared to tell me, at the expiration of the three years for which I had entered the college, that another was necessary for the completion of my studies. But in truth there existed a much greater barrier to my return home than incomplete studies.

There was, on my account, great confusion at home. My mother had powerfully advocated my cause, and my father was disposed to accede to her desire of having recourse to

the Holy Congregation of Bishops and Regulars for a dispensation from my vow; but my brother the priest, who, with the habit, had assumed all the principles of his Order, opposed his will to the generous wishes of the whole family. He often came to the college to taunt me with words that I did not understand, "the honour of the family," "what will be said," "the decorum of the Order,"—to which I found adequate replies in appealing to conscience, to justice, to God. He therefore went and returned, each time more determined in his opposition, and I parted from him more bent on my purpose.

However, my vigorous resistance did very little towards the advancement of my cause, for my family dared not to move a step contrary to the will of the ministers of the Holy Church, and I doubt not but that even the Jesuits were active on this occasion. At length my mother, urged to the step by the importunate letters which I continued to have conveyed to her, wrote to me privately, insinuating that I should address a memorial to the Pope, unfolding to him the whole affair.

I employed myself all the following night in preparing the memorial. Being uninitiated in the intricacies of Roman theology, after having described the peculiarities of my unfortunate situation, I strung together, as well as I was able, all those reasons for memorializing him, which suggested them-



selves to me from reading the rules and constitutions, and from the perusal of those books which had fallen in my way ; such as, that the vow ought to be spontaneous—that clear and reasonable instruction should be given to the candidate, that the nature of the vow be not misconceived—that the rule of St. Benedict says, the rules and constitutions should be explained to a candidate three times in the course of a year, and that he should have a copy of them in his room, that he may, at his leisure, meditate and ponder on the choice he is about to make. But that, contrary to these wholesome regulations, not only had my consent to the vow been forced from my lips, but I had been traitorously made to believe that the step they invited me to take was a mere form, and bound me to nothing. That with regard to the rules, though I had repeatedly inquired for them, even from my first conversation with the General, they had always been denied me, and that I had no opportunity of reading them, until they were secretly given to me by D. Alberico Amatori, a year after my forced profession. And to conclude, I entered into an energetic protestation against all the monks. This memorial I sent to my mother, who forwarded it, unknown to my family, to the Holy Congregation, which was then assembled.

The Secretary, Monsignor Bizzari, read my memorial aloud. The Cardinals pretended

astonishment at the atrocious facts it contained. They immediately summoned the Procurator-General, D. Girolomo Bottini, and commanded him to give me the liberty of going to support before them, my protestations against the community of the Cistercians.

These proceedings soon became known, and were the general topic of conversation in Rome. The Masters were loud in their invectives, but nevertheless, counselled by the wolfish heart enclosed in their bosom, they assumed towards me the manner of lambs. Greater liberty was awarded me. After this public appeal, vigilance over my steps would have been impolitic, as all would have thought that in keeping me strictly guarded, they were actuated by fear lest I should further expose their enormities.

In the meantime, I was secretly encouraged by the priests and friars, to pursue with vigour the process I had commenced. The religious Orders which the Church of Rome has made it her care to multiply under her banner, esteeming them her Janisaries, jealous of each other's power, are constantly at war among themselves ; in one point only do they agree—that of laying aside their private animosities for the purpose of acting in unison against the secular clergy.

Numerous as are her divisions, Rome boasts of the unity of which she makes herself the



centre—as if speculative unity was sufficient—and as though charity was not requisite to form the unity of that body of which St. Paul speaks in the twelfth chapter of Romans, v. 5: “So we being many are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.” Are the divisions, with which she reproaches Christians who protest against her, contrary to the unity of faith and charity? The causes of the division between brotherhood and brotherhood, and between these and the priests, in the Church of Rome, are strikingly worldly; they are to be traced to pride, avarice, turpitude. The unity of the Romish faith has man for its centre, and the means by which the parts are united, are also of themselves basely human—force, chains, persecutions. Is there not in the Evangelical Church, which Rome calls “*heretical*,” the true unity? The Bible is the common centre, and the Bible is the Word of God—the divers interpretations of the Bible, which none esteem infallible, are all subordinate to the sense that God gives to his Word. The thread which unites the several parts of the Evangelical body is holy liberty in the Lord. Hence the apparent divisions do not nullify the unity of love and of charity, because the individualities of each party are directed by the self-same Spirit of the Lord. This digression may appear out of place, but unity being the boasted palladium of the Romish Church, it

is necessary to show that she can establish no claim to internal unity.

My brother continued to weary me with importunities to induce me to relinquish my contest against so venerable an Order, alleging as a reason, the serious scandal to which it would give rise. With regard to the scandal, I replied that it would fall upon the monks, and not on me; neither was it just, that, to prevent the oppressor from losing his ill-acquired credit, the oppressed should allow himself to be sacrificed without a struggle. As a last resource, finding that neither prayers nor menaces could move me from my purpose, he sent individuals, held, in Rome, in the highest estimation for doctrine and sanctity, to reason with me, D. Biagio Valentini, Il Canonico del Bufolo, the Father Finetti, with others of various Orders, and lastly, the celebrated Abbot Pallotta, but their endeavours to subvert my opinions were of no avail.

My room had the appearance of a lawyer's office; papers of defence, petitions, certificates, books, were strewn upon my table. I was engaged in writing from morning till night, excepting in the hours of school. At the commencement of the cause it seemed as if “my feet were stumbling upon the dark mountains;” I could form no idea of what might be the result.

I had now been struggling for six months,



and earnestly hoped that, whether favourable or not, the tribunal would, ere long, pronounce judgment ; but, contrary to every expectation, silence was imposed on me, and the case adjourned for four months. During this interval I was strenuously solicited, by all parties, to withdraw my complaints ; and in order that their entreaties might be more effectual, the monks, Masters, and General, clothed themselves with unwonted humanity, and exhibited towards me a degree of affection perfectly fraternal. But well I knew what snakes lay concealed beneath the flowers.

It was at this period that I became acquainted with the widowed Queen of Sardinia, Maria Theresa, who twice visited our monastery, and was informed of my mournful history. She professed compassion for my situation, but, educated in a Royal palace in Italy, her heart was callous to the groans of the unfortunate. Groans are a pleasing harmony to Italian Sovereigns ; they prefer them to the spontaneous and festive praises which a free people offer to their rulers. Had she truly pitied me she would not have wanted means to protect me. But when were tyrants ever condemned by tyrants ?

Easter came. I was commanded to confess, but not to the usual confessor, D. Candido Laurenzi, the only person who had ever showed the slightest sympathy in my griefs. One Father Filippo della Consolazione, a Carmelite,

of the Convent della Vittoria, was appointed my confessor. Thus was I subjected to a double annoyance, to confess, and to make my confession under an odious restriction. With regard to the confession, which I now looked upon merely as an act of Christian humility, I was inclined to submit, though I felt, it is true, a repugnance to obeying a single precept of the Romish religion ; but when one man was chosen, by the Superiors, to hear my confession, in preference to another, while the rules forbade to impose such a yoke, I determined to contest the point with vigour.

This Father Filippo was reputed to be a converter of youths, but not on that account did I shun him. A hundred Fathers Filippo could not have converted me, for the grace of God is light, and cannot be overcome with darkness. I declared to the General that I would confess to no other man than the Prior—that the rule did not sanction such an act of tyranny as he wished to impose ; and concluded with observing, “The rule is approved by the Pope, whom you profess to obey, and whose infallibility you recognise, and yet you transgress it. Do you not then believe in the Pope ?” These words seemed only to augment the evil, by rendering the General more resolved on carrying his point. I persisted in my refusal till Holy Wednesday : the following day was appointed for the com-



munion, and I was menaced with imprisonment if I continued obstinate. "Well, then, I will go," said I, "but remember I am at liberty to restrain my tongue." Thus did my enemies compel me to sip a fresh cup of bitterness. The confessor was not content with his new penitent; but I humbly hope my prayers and faith on that occasion were not unaccepted by God.

The four months were passed, and I was cited to appear before the Congregation to hear my condemnation. It is impossible to express the astonishment with which I read the words, "to hear my condemnation." Perhaps they are to be understood, thought I, of the condemnation of my tribulations. At the time appointed I presented myself at the Congregation, and was told to return on the following day, when the decision on the case would be publicly declared. The Secretary, who had at first showed himself opposed to giving me any information concerning the proceedings, was at last, from the agitated state of my feelings, moved to compassion, and taking me kindly by the hand, said, "The Cardinals are all agreed upon the justice of your demand, the Pope has affixed his signature to their decision, and when the sentence shall have been publicly read, and duly registered, you will be at liberty to return to your home. Be of good cheer—your triumph is complete, notwithstanding

all that the monks have alleged against you."

Encouraged by his kind and sympathizing tone, I added, "Pardon my importunity, but may I inquire what are the accusations laid to my charge?"

"Under promise that you will not speak on the subject, I will tell you, though you can be at no loss to imagine what they may be. You are charged with being a heretic; you are stated to be restless in school, always opposing yourself to the wholesome principles of religion; to shew an absence of all pious feelings, especially during the general psalmody in the choir; to answer the Superiors insolently; and to conclude, they protest that they are grossly calumniated by your assertion that they have administered to you poison."

"But I have brought forward sufficient evidence of the fact, in the persons of Dr. Riccardi, the physician, and others who were present."

"True, and on that account it is that their charges against you have had no weight in the decision. You can now return to the monastery; but inform no one of what has passed between us."

I thanked him, and left him. On my return, my young companions besieged me with inquiries, but I could only answer them—To-morrow all will be known.



As stated by the Secretary, the Cardinals assembled on the following day to proclaim their decision. Full of hope I hastened to the Congregation, where, with throbbing head and beating heart, I listened with intense eagerness to the words of the Protocolist. On his reading the last clause of the sentence, for which I was not at all prepared, I became for a moment transfixed with astonishment. Their inequitable decision ran thus:—That the monastic profession was null; that I was at liberty to lay aside the Cistercian habit, and to return to live freely in the bosom of my family. But, let it be known, was continued, that he is prohibited from marrying—though a secular, he must remain a celibat, like the Knights of Malta.

Behold the wisdom of Justice! the infallibility of a Pope! My monastic profession was declared null; it was allowed that I had made no vow; it was admitted that I was oppressed; that reparation was due to me; and yet they continued to gall me; they adopted the same design of persecution. What I would not recognise as a vow, they imposed on me as a law; that which, at the commencement of the sentence, was declared null, was confirmed at the end.

I started on hearing this unjust sentence, signed by him who dares to call himself the Vicar of Christ, and summoning all my energy, in a firm voice I exclaimed, "I pro-

test against any exception whatsoever." I was told that I could make my protest by writing to the Cardinal Patrizi, Prefect of the Tribunal. Thus were my hopes suddenly swept away. If I would return home I must accept the iniquitous sentence, and continue a monk without the monastic walls; refusing to do this, the sentence remained suspended, and I had no right to quit the college.

By the line of conduct I pursued, I closed against myself an easy way of escape from all my embarrassments. Once more with my family, I might have abandoned Italy, and have set the iniquitous Papal laws at defiance; but in the flattering persuasion that I should be able to reconcile my liberty with the endearing ties of country and friends, I never thought of bursting those strongest of all bonds drawn by nature between man and the beings who have watched his birth. Sometimes, under the rigour of persecution, the thought of a far-off land, where the shadows of darkness were dispelled by the sun of liberty and light—of an hospitable shore that would receive me as her own, and leave me free to follow the dictates of my conscience, would dart across my mind; but these moments past, a hundred dear remembrances rose and obliterated the thought. 'Tis hard to abandon the land of one's birth; and the fury of the persecution against me being at this time considerably abated, the idea of flight



from Italy was spurned from a heart that was keenly alive to the tenderest emotions of family affection. Had it, at this moment, been revealed to me that new and more bitter persecutions were hanging over my head ; had it been announced that, as a last severe dispensation, the indignation of my parents would add weight to the blow, I should not have hesitated a moment to concur in the sentence, with the sole intention of bidding adieu for ever to Italy.

The course of philosophy was at length completed, and my parents came to the college for the purpose of obtaining the consent of the Superiors to my return home ; but their good intentions were overcome by the representations of the masters. The nature of their long conversation with the Superiors ere I was summoned, was fully revealed by the manner in which I was received by them. Having flown to embrace my mother, she avoided my approach, receding a few paces, and concealing her face, bathed in tears, in her handkerchief. With surprise I addressed her, exclaiming, "Why is this? What have I done? Am I not worthy of your affection?"

"No," said my father, with tears in his eyes, but with a firm voice, "no, you are not worthy of the name of son. You embitter our declining years ; you disgrace the good education you have received ; you have stifled

the good principles that we have instilled into your . . . ."

Here interrupting him, I said, "At least tell me, I entreat, in what I have failed?"

"Have you the effrontery to ask such a question? Are you then lost to a sense of remorse? You curse God? you blaspheme Christ—"

I could hear no more. Roused with indignation at so black a calumny, I exclaimed in a voice of passion—"Liars! deceivers! have they proceeded even to such lengths? Do they aim at bursting the bonds of consanguinity? Will they deprive me of the affections of my family? Do not, my dear parents, allow yourselves to be thus deceived ; I worship God ; I adore Christ ; but because I am a *Christian* I am hated by those persons whose only God is their belly."

"Do you not see that you are condemning yourself?" was the reply. "To speak evil of the ministers of God is gross impiety ; it is offending the Almighty in the apple of his eye. Utter not such sacrilegious words ; suffer them not to proceed out of your mouth. Were you indeed a Christian, it is not to be conceived that the Superiors would all declare you impious ;—all concur in condemning you ;—all affirm that you exhibit no tokens of piety. You say you adore Christ, while you



trample on the laws of the Church. Are you not sensible that by slighting *her* you blaspheme *Christ*?"

Striving in vain to convince my unhappy parents, I found with bitterness the truth of that saying so common in Italy, "*A lie from a Superior is worth a hundred truths from a vassal.*" This sentence is a summary of the moral and political state of my unfortunate country, where the idea of power is based, not upon justice and truth, but on brute force. My parents left me, turning away in sorrow and anger, and I went to my chamber overwhelmed with grief and desolation at being thus abandoned. 'Twas then I felt how consolatory was prayer; how inestimable the privilege of being permitted to address God as "Our Father, who art in heaven."

In all the colleges, both secular and regular, it is customary for the students, at the termination of the course of philosophy, to give a proof of their proficiency in the science, by supporting some thesis in public. Those who are considered to have been the most attentive, and to have made the greatest progress in the study, are selected for the attempt. Six young men were chosen, among whom the masters placed myself; trusting, perhaps, that the honours usually conferred on such occasions would flatter my juvenile vanity, and divert me from my purpose of quitting

the monastery. But this intention was too deeply rooted in my heart to be displaced by any monkish device.

A few days after the defence of the thesis on the spirituality of the soul, a number of books were brought to my room, which at once convinced me it was their intention that I should commence the study of theology. I therefore observed to the master, "You know I am about to quit the college; why have you purchased for me these books?" He gave me to understand, but with perfect good humour, that my being about to leave, in no way exonerated me from accommodating myself to the customs of the college so long as I remained in it; and that it was not until I had altogether quitted them that I could please myself in my studies. I therefore quietly took possession of these volumes, and placed them in my bookcase.

In the mean time the General Convention opened, in the monastery of S. Croce in Gerusalemme. It is an assembly of all the Superiors of the various monasteries of the Order, and is convoked every fifth year, for the purpose of establishing such constitutions as are thought to be necessary for the well-being of the entire community, and of confirming the appointments made to the different offices. This cabal—for such it may be termed, from the numerous plots and counter-plots by which



its proceedings were regulated, and from the injustice of its administration—lasted a week.

Accusations against the despotism of the Superiors, which poured in from all quarters, were judged by the accused themselves, and as not one amongst them was free from the charge, not one dared to cast the first stone. Revenge presides over the different appointments. An order from the Pope confirmed D. Nivardo Tassini in the dignity of Superior-General, notwithstanding the rule ordains that the election shall be made by the monks. His Holiness was well aware that a man better fitted for this office than D. Nivardo Tassini could not be easily found, as he had given sufficient proof of the spirit by which he was animated—a spirit of violence and oppression.

Of the numerous acts of cruelty and injustice originating with the Convention, I will merely notice one case, which has some connexion with the facts here narrated, namely, that of D. Alberico Amatori. He was the only one of fifteen to whom the monks had not caused the water of Tofania to be administered, and it was to him a matter of astonishment, that, having been the promoter of a reform stifled at its birth, he should be exempt from persecution. The crafty monks had, however, reserved for this man a persecution which they knew would be to him

more severe, because clothed in legal forms. He was deposed from the office of librarian—an appointment held with infinite satisfaction by one, who, in the cultivation of the sciences, found relief from the regrets and annoyance of living in so lax an observance of the primitive rule. The scepticism, as the monks termed it, into which he had fallen rendered this step necessary. Moreover, he was commanded, within the space of fifteen days, to quit Rome for the monastery of Chiaravalle, in the Marshes of Ancona. Such a decree was equivalent to sentence of death; for the noxious air of the locality was calculated to produce on his weak frame an effect as fatal as that of poison. And lastly, he is required to retract those errors, as they were called, that he had sought to spread among the monks. Amatori was not a man to act contrary to the dictate of reason and conscience through fear of suffering; he bowed his head to the sentence, and set out for his place of exile, but he remained inexorable on the point of conscience.

Beloved friend, receive, as from my lips, this tribute of gratitude for having opened to me the path of truth, by placing before me the book in which it is revealed by God. Should this little volume ever fall under thy observation, and earnestly do I hope it may, no acrimonious expression will escape thy lips, re-echoing the maledictions that will be



showered down upon me by my persecutors. Though thou mayest blame, thou wilt not condemn. They have oppressed thee and me.

### FIFTH YEAR.

AT the close of the General Convention, the resolutions sanctioned by it were promptly followed out, and each one disposed himself for five years of suffering or enjoyment, according as he was destined to be a victim or a tyrant.

The General Tassini exchanged his residence in the monastery of San Bernardo alle Terme, for the more commodious and magnificent one of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, and prepared to take with him all the young monks; the aged men coming to fix their abode in the monastery of San Bernardo. I, of course, expected to be included in the number of the young men; how could I possibly suppose otherwise? But, however, while my companions were preparing for their change of habitation, I was summoned by the General, who, in the presence of the Monks D. Florenzio Garcia and D. Gioachino Aleû, thus addressed me:

“Tell me, should you like to go with the young men to S. Croce in Gerusalemme; or do you prefer staying here?”

“Most assuredly I should prefer accompanying my companions. I trust you consider me as one of the young men?”

“That depends entirely on yourself; if you prove docile, which is an indispensable qualification for youth, you will go with us; if you prove obstinate—a failing common to the aged—you will remain with them.”

“How will that be? Explain yourself, if you please.”

“The explanation is given in a few words; sign this paper, and you will go with us; refuse, and you remain here.” Thus saying, he unfolded a sheet of written paper.

“May I ask what I am required to sign in that paper?”

“Nothing but what it is your duty to sign, viz., the retraction of a step you took in a burst of phrenzy, of the scandal you have given rise to, and of the appeal uselessly made to the Holy Congregation of Bishops and Regulars. In short, a declaration in which you declare yourself contented with the holy state voluntarily chosen by you.”

At these words I started, and exclaimed in a tone of indignation, “Never, no never will I subscribe my name to that paper.”

“Very well,” he replied, with that horrid grin which adapts itself so well to the lips and physiognomy of tyrants, “Very well, you show that you are as stubborn as an old man, and therefore you must remain with them.”



I did not at that moment understand the malignity and cruelty of this new method of torture, nor can any one fully comprehend it, who does not maturely reflect on the different natures of youth and age.

Without indulging, however, in reflections open to every contemplative mind, I will proceed to give faithfully an account of the torments that were preparing for me. Besides the contrarieties naturally existing between the two extremes of life, there were other reasons peculiar to my circumstances, which rendered my situation particularly trying. My aversion to the monastic state was calculated to raise in the minds of those monks, who, like myself, had been sacrificed, a renewal of morbid feelings of sensibility, which served but to irritate the naturally austere character of the celibat; and to others who had voluntarily run the tedious course, my unhappy disinclination to follow their steps was an incessant motive to bitter reproofs with magnificent encomiums on their own blessed life. The austerity of the aged celibat cannot be comprehended by the man who has passed his days amidst the social endearments of a family, who again lives in his children, and who, for their sakes, is continually fostering in his breast the spark of humanity. He feels for his fellow-man, and forgets not that he himself was once young; he knows the passions, and has learned to regulate them. But the

celibat, pretending to be ignorant of their existence, esteems himself an angel, and acts as though he had a right to despise all, who, holding themselves above disguise, confess to the weaknesses of human nature.

To be compelled to live with the old Cistercians in San Bernardo, was a condemnation similar to that which the refined cruelty of Massenzio invented, of binding an unhappy man to a corpse. Torn from the young men, in whose society I certainly found much comfort, I remained in the monastery, like a bee snatched from the hive, and shut up in a wasp's nest. Fortunately for me, the Father Laurenzi was also left behind in the capacity of minister, that is to say, administrator of the revenues of those *who make vows of poverty for the purpose of living more luxuriously*. He also had been visited by the vengeance of the monks assembled in the Convention, for having borne witness in my favour before the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars; and instead of meeting with the preferment he merited, he was degraded from the priorship to the office of minister. His society greatly relieved the ennui of this hospital of irritable invalids.

My lodging consisted of three rooms, decently furnished, and a young man was appointed my servant, who dedicated himself to me with incomparable fidelity, the remembrance of which will accompany me to the



tomb. The manner in which I conducted myself towards the old men moderated, by degrees, the acrimony of their behaviour ; I ever avoided contradicting them, and yielded a tacit silence to their long and tedious tales. This they interpreted as respectful docility, and persuaded themselves that the representations of the Superiors, with regard to my turbulent and restless disposition, were false. Ere long I became the object of their affections, and as a proof of their good-will they elected me honorary librarian of the monastery. Think not, reader, that circumstance had reconciled me, and that I had ceased to look upon this place as a sepulchre—that I no longer felt the agony of Massenzio's punishment. I felt it most severely, and it was only that I might not increase my woe, that I suffered these old men to remain under an illusion that gained to me a degree of affection which, I own, I did not merit.

Under pretext of the duties of my new office, I spent the greater portion of my time alone in the library, much preferring the converse of the dead to the wearisome tales of those aged drones with whom I was associated. I passed many hours in the garden, abandoning myself to the pleasing idea of being able finally to burst my chains, which, from a long struggle, had become considerably relaxed. Occasionally I went out in company with D. Candido Laurenzi ; refraining, by his advice,

from leaving the monastery alone, which indulgence had been at length accorded me, that I might thus avoid the risk of having my character calumniated through the envy of the monks.

I was one day with the Prior and several monks, when a cicerone presented himself, and besought the former to allow the church to be opened for some English ladies, who were waiting below to view the interior. On hearing that they were English, and no doubt conceiving that they were Protestants, the harsh character of the Prior became annoyed and irritated, and he roughly replied that he could not permit it to be shewn. The cicerone shrugged his shoulders, and went away, murmuring imprecations against the incivility of the monks. Ignorant that his refusal proceeded from a resolution taken of keeping the church closed at noon, for the quiet and good order of the monastery, I looked upon it as a mere display of ill-feeling towards the English, and having declared myself a Protestant, felt called upon to wage war against the spirit of intolerance. Therefore, hastily arising, I followed the man, determined to open the church for the party.

“Where are you going ?” demanded the monks.

“I am going to open the church.”

“You need not trouble yourself, they are Protestants.”



"It is on that account I am going."

At this reply, the monks and Prior remained fixed with astonishment, and I proceeded to open the door of the church myself, that no blame might be imputed to the sacristan. I was informed that the ladies were her Royal Highness the Duchess of Cambridge, and her daughter, the Princess Augusta; they were accompanied by two gentlemen, whose names I did not hear. Four years had now elapsed since I had had any communication with the gentler sex, excepting only my mother and sisters, so that on finding myself in their presence, I felt troubled, confused, wanting in those gentle manners required in social intercourse; but after a few minutes, my bashfulness being overcome by their easy and affable deportment, I was able to reply to their questions, and to give them a brief account of the origin and history of the church and Cistercian institution. The Princess Augusta, led perhaps to suspect the truth from seeing me dressed with more studied care than became a cloister, inquired if I were satisfied to be shut up in a monastery. "No, your Highness, this habit is none of my choice, but I am forced," was my answer.

This prompt reply, which revealed all the bitterness and agony of my soul, perhaps raised in the hearts of the two illustrious travellers a feeling of pity for the speaker, for a long silence ensued, which was at last

interrupted by my inviting them to inspect the garden of the monastery. Thus did I again permit my feelings to hurry me into another act of indiscretion. They accepted my invitation, perfectly unconscious that the precincts of the garden were inviolable, no female being allowed to tread its paths, and that the excommunication of the Pope hung over its entrance, ready to fall on the devoted head of the unfortunate monk who should dare to be the means of breaking the rule.

The Papal censures, which had at one time appeared to my mind so formidable, no longer filled me with terror. The perusal of the Bible had convinced me of the usurpation and fallacy of pontifical supremacy, and I had become careless of the consequences of wrath from that quarter. Commanding the servant, therefore, to open the entrance to the garden on the side of the Piazza Termini, I hastened to the spot to await the arrival of the Royal visitors, who having returned to their carriage, were proceeding in that direction. They entered the garden, and expressed themselves much delighted with the beauty of its appearance. The running streams, the shady walks, and the brilliant and odoriferous flowers, called forth their admiration. To me they spoke but little, but before leaving they asked my name, and inscribed it on a page of their "Guide to Rome."

No sooner were the visitors gone, than I



began to reflect on the imprudent length to which I had been carried by the warmth of my feelings. But, however, accustomed to persecution, and knowing that I had given the monks sufficient cause for offence, I resolved not to be annoyed at any consequences that might ensue. On entering the monastery, I heard myself called "Excommunicated," but still, notwithstanding the severe penalty prescribed by the rule for the violation of the cloister, my offence was, to all appearance, overlooked. I cannot consider this mildness of measures to have been the fruit of tolerance, for that is a tree which does not flourish in the Romish Church, much less among the monks; it sprung from indifference, in the modern monks, to ancient constitutions, and apathy, where their own pleasures are not interfered with. Besides which, probably, as I appeared to have laid down my arms, and to be disposed to peace, they were careful not to incense me by recalling to mind, through persecution, my former ideas of liberty. They treated me as a mother treats a spoiled child, indulging his every caprice at one time, hoping that he may voluntarily obey her wishes at another. But their soft and gentle demeanour soon changed into harshness and severity when, the armistice being broken, I showed signs of returning to hostilities.

Having long tortured my brain to find

some means of eluding the arts and intrigues of my adversaries, the idea at last occurred to me, that as I was not fox enough to be able to cope with the wiles of these tyrants, brought up in deceit, I might, probably, in the long run, have the worst of it, and therefore it behoved me, if possible, to enlist in my cause, some person who, being as crafty as themselves, should fight against them with equal arms. Could I but succeed, thought I, in engaging in my defence one of a rival order, I might look upon myself as emancipated. With this motive I formed the project of imploring the assistance of some Jesuit, well knowing the influence these men possess in Rome, and also how eagerly they seize every opportunity that presents itself of lowering the pride of those Monastic Orders, superior to themselves in endowments and power.

After much reflection, I adopted the resolution of speaking on the subject with the Father Mislei, secretary in the house of S. Andrea a Monte Cavallo. I was led to make this choice from the knowledge that he was confessor to many of the Cardinals, and that, therefore, he could, if he chose, render me further service than any other person, and conduct me, through his influence, to the desired goal. I commenced operations by asking for the Superior's permission to go to him to make my confession. So unusual a



demand, unsupported by reasons of sufficient weight, awoke suspicions in the minds of the Superiors, who narrowly watched my every movement. I could only, in justification of my request, plead the little satisfaction I experienced in confessing to the monks among whom I lived. This reason was deemed insufficient, and permission was denied to me. Having, without success, tried every possible way of persuasion, I resolved, as a last expedient, to place them, according to the Italian phraseology, *in a strait with their shoulders to the wall*, by protesting that, if they persisted in their refusal, I would never again confess. Some of my readers will say, "But why did you continue to confess, looking, as you did, upon *confession* as a human invention?" To this question I need only answer that, in submitting to the external act as a practice of humility, I did not regard it as a means of being absolved from my sins, which, I knew, could only be washed away by faith in the most precious blood of Jesus Christ. Nor could I have neglected this act, so strictly enjoined, without exposing myself uselessly to the wrath of the Holy Office.

My intimation that I would altogether abstain from confession, unless the permission which I sought was granted me, had, at first, no effect; but when, at the expiration of several months, they found me still persisting, they yielded, and it was announced that I was

at liberty to go to Father Mislei. It is not improbable but that the monks had, during this interval, taken their measures with the Jesuit, for the purpose of defeating any scheme I might have formed to their prejudice. Whether they really acted conjointly, I am ignorant; but however that might be, what could be more impolitic than my plan of confiding in a Jesuit to assist my anti-monastic, anti-papistical views? Was it not much more probable that the Jesuits, being the firmest bulwarks of Romish superstition, and the stanchest supporters of moral slavery, in Italy especially, would rather act in concert with the Cistercians, and prevent my conquering in a struggle that struck at the very root of their power? Oh, the foolishness of youth! The ignorance of early days! I was overtaken by the same misfortune as Esop's frogs, who, not content with the log, demanded another king, and then had to lament, when too late, the voracity of the stork.

The Father Mislei received me in the most benevolent and courteous manner, and sympathized in my misfortunes. I told him of my resolve to break the yoke which they would force upon me against my will. He spoke to me encouragingly—I cursed the monks, and he approved; I waxed warm in the recital of the harshness with which I had been treated, and he feigned to be seized with holy indignation at the relation of my sufferings. He



was nearly brought to tears ; but instead of tears he sent forth at intervals half-suppressed sighs, as though he would breathe out his tender soul and place it in my hands. Enraptured with this exhibition of what I took to be natural feeling, I believed I had at last found the thread of escape from this labyrinth of trouble ; I could have believed anything rather than that this was a mere scene being enacted to answer certain ends. I had not then read the history of the Jesuits, nor knew that the text of St. Paul, 1 Cor. ix. 22, "I am made all things to all men, that I might by all means save some," had been interpreted by them in the impious sense of—"The end justifies the means ;" and that both in Japan and China the Jesuits had made themselves even idolaters, in order that they might thus entice the people. The counsel this man gave me was to the effect, that I should consider my conscience free from all obligations to obey the monastic rules, to which I was no longer subject, in consequence of the nullity of my profession. It was also his advice that I should address myself to the Cardinal Patrizi, Prefect of the Holy Congregation, and insist on a public avowal of the violence done to me, and he concluded with saying, "Take courage, my son, you do not sue for pardon, but for justice ; speak to him freely, set aside human regard ; your conscience—the salvation of your soul, is at stake, and all the

Cardinals who have ever lived cannot save that, if it be sacrificed by yourself. Courage, I say, go at once, and return to inform me of the result of your interview."

The next day I requested permission to go to the Cardinal Patrizi, and was prepared to meet with some obstacle to my wishes ; but, to my surprise, the monks immediately gave their assent. Such ready acquiescence might have reminded me of the Roman proverb, "Gatto ci Cova," but Divine Providence, whose hand guided me to the end of this perilous way, had placed a bandage before my eyes, saying, "Follow me, and thou shalt be safe."

The Cardinal gave me a courteous reception, and, agreeably to the suggestion of Father Mislei, I proceeded to explain to him, in respectful terms, the state of my feelings. He heard me with calmness to the end, and then, assuming an imposing attitude, he said, with an imperious tone, "Enough, Signor Ciocci, no more of this. Submit yourself to that state in which you have been placed by the Divine will. Prepare yourself for holy orders, nor tell me that you have no inclinations for the cloister ; if you have it not, ask this grace earnestly in prayer, and through such means it will be given you. The disposition may be obtained by those who are devoid of it. 'Si non es vocatus fac ut voceris.'" At the quotation of



this proverb, which had been repeated to me over and over again since the commencement of my controversy, I felt the blood boil in my veins; now appeared the opportunity for obeying the Jesuit's injunctions to speak candidly, and forgetting little by little in whose presence I stood, I exclaimed, "Is there, then, your Eminence, no justice for me? Are the laws made only for parade?—do they wear the semblance of reason and justice, without affording succour to the oppressed? Will you that I remain a monk, when you have yourself, in the sentence, acknowledged that I am no longer one—that my vows are null? Do you insist on my saying mass—do you command me? . . . Ah well, since the Romish Church openly declares herself unjust, and throws aside her mask before me, I also openly protest against her. Will you insist on my saying mass, while I do not believe in your mass?" . . . To these words I added others, which passion forced from my lips. The Cardinal was totally unprepared for this exhibition of feeling, and was evidently astonished at so much boldness in so young a monk. He contemplated me from top to toe, as a giant might a pigmy, and then assuming a quiet air, he invited me, with pacific words, to calm myself, leading me to believe that with patience all I sought would yet be obtained. Notwithstanding the hopes of redress that he held out, I left him with a

swelling heart, and with a presentiment of new troubles.

The following day I returned to the Jesuit, and related to him all that had passed. Shaking his head, and murmuring certain exclamations between his teeth, he pointed out industriously the danger of my situation, and the depth of the abyss which I had prepared by my own imprudence. To soften any seeming asperity on his part, he avowed his persuasion that these hasty words had been drawn from my lips by a blind resentment, to which I had at that moment yielded, but at the same time he feared, he added, they might occasion my ruin; for the Cardinal Patrizi would, no doubt, repeat them to the holy Inquisition. A prompt reaction, he observed, must be instantly brought about, or the consequence might prove fatal to me, and therefore he would speak to the Cardinal Castracani, Confessor-in-Chief, to dispose him in my favour. Having thus set forth the part he thought proper to play in the affair in the most advantageous light, he persuaded me, by way of penance for my offence, to present myself on the following morning to the Cardinal Castracani and declare to him that what I had uttered before the Cardinal Patrizi was spoken in a moment of anger, in a burst of bitterness, which I repented of having indulged. He said much on the necessity of this step; and, when I promised to obey, confirmed me in the



hope that no evil would arise from what had taken place. Whited sepulchre ! he smiled when I left him, while his heart was enjoying the deep satisfaction of seeing me run into the snare he had spread for my feet.

In like manner did the Cardinal Castracani, who was prepared for my visit by the Father Mislei, smile on the morrow. Having listened to the whole recital without any manifestation of anger—from which I argued good, and thought myself indebted to the kind interposition of the Father Confessor—he mildly inquired whether I really did not believe in the doctrine of transubstantiation, and, in short, all that the Romish Church taught. I frankly answered, No. His Eminence did not at this reply bristle his hair like a wounded bear, nor swell himself like a porcupine, said to dart his quills at an offender ; no, he did something worse ; . . . he smiled with the smile of a Jesuit, and said, in a gentle tone, “ My son, I clearly perceive that there is no malice in you ; you give too ready an ear to the inventions of heretics, and this is a consequence of your not having received sufficient instruction. I feel assured, that when you shall have heard a series of lectures from the good Father Jesuits, those excellent men of whom you already know something, your ideas will be cleared, and the darkness with which you are now enveloped will give place to light. Repair, then, immediately to

S. Eusebio for three days ; that time will, I think, suffice to set your doubts at rest. Tell my wishes to your Superior, and go without delay ! you will there be treated as you merit.” Praised be the truth ! whatever may be the faults of this poor Cardinal, no one can reproach him with telling a falsehood in this instance ; as the treatment I received from those excellent men will prove.

The idea of escaping with so easy a penance, of being able to pass three days away from the monastery of San Bernardo—a place odious to me from a thousand remembrances—and of mixing with persons whom I yet supposed would echo my complaints against the monks, awoke in my heart such joy and gladness, that I prepared with alacrity to obey the command. To return to the monastery—to ask the consent of the Superior, which was readily granted—to prepare my portmanteau, was the affair of a moment. As I was getting into the carriage, two persons of sinister aspect approached, and signified their intention of accompanying me. Who they were, or what was their profession, I knew not ; all that I was acquainted with was their names, one was Constantino Bontempi, the other Pietro Sordini.

These men I had often seen talking with the Superior, but without troubling myself to learn anything of their calling, for their appearance was by no means prepossessing.



With regard to their profession, I think I may venture to assert that they were men of bad character, ruffians of the monastery—flesh sold to the Scribes and Pharisees. These persons accompanied me to the gate of S. Eusebio, where, having consigned me into the hands of others, they instantly disappeared, taking with them my servant, and what afterwards proved to me a still greater misfortune, my portmanteau. Whether this was the effect of inadvertency, or a refinement of cruelty, I cannot determine. My attention being arrested by the two Jesuits who had come out to receive me, and who were profuse in their civilities, I neither heeded the absence of my servant, whom I supposed occupied in his duties, nor the sudden departure of the carriage, but walked at once into the monastery with my two gaolers.

We traversed long corridors, till we arrived at the door of an apartment which they requested me to enter, and they themselves retired. On opening the door I found myself in a close dark room, barely large enough for the little furniture it contained, which consisted of a small hard bed—hard as the conscience of an inquisitor—a little table cut all over, and a dirty ill-used chair. The window, which was shut, and barred with iron, resisted all my efforts to open it. My heart sunk within me, and I began to cogitate on the destiny that was in store for me; but,

notwithstanding all my misgivings, I could not persuade myself that the word of a Cardinal would be broken. At length the truth burst upon my mind, that possibly his words might be easily verified in a contrary sense, and that there was something sybil-like about them. Had I not made to him an open avowal of my disbelief in the Romish opinions? and yet I had interpreted his words, “As you merit,” in the sense which my own conscience dictated, without reflecting that he spoke according to his.

The Jesuit Giuliani entered at this moment, and found me absorbed in these reflections. Recognising in him one of the two, who, but a short time before, had done the honours of the house and overwhelmed me with civilities, I hoped to be able to obtain, through his means, some enlightenment on the subject that engrossed my thoughts. The profound obscurity which reigned in the apartment prevented me from perceiving that he no longer wore the same hilarity of countenance with which he had received me, otherwise I should probably have abstained from a request which I immediately made, that he would permit the window to be opened for the admission of light and air. Before the words were finished he interrupted me, exclaiming in a voice of thunder—

“How! wretched youth, thou complaineest of the dark, whilst thou art living in the



clouds of error? Dost thou desire the light of heaven, while thou rejectest the light of the Catholic faith?"

Though I perceived remonstrance would be useless, I replied, "Know, if you are yet ignorant of it, that I have been sent here by the Cardinal Castracani, for three days, for the purpose of receiving instruction, and not to be treated as a criminal."

"For three days," he resumed, counterfeiting my tone of voice, "for three days! that would be nothing. The dainty youth will not, forsooth, be roughly treated; it remains to be seen whether he desires to be courteously entertained. Be converted, be converted, condemned soul; fortunate is it for thee that thou art come to this place. Thou wilt never quit it excepting with the real fruits of penitence! Among these silent shades canst thou meditate at thy leisure upon the deplorable state into which thou art fallen. Woe unto thee, if thou refusest to listen to the voice of God, who conducts souls into solitude, that he may speak with them!" So saying, he abruptly left me.

I remained alone, drooping under the weight of a misfortune, which was the more severe, because totally unexpected. I stood, I know not for how long, like a statue, in the same position in which the Jesuit had left me. On recovering from this lethargy, the first idea that presented itself was flight;

but this thought was no sooner conceived than abandoned—there was no possibility of flight. I gave myself up to my reflections, which were of the gloomiest character; not a single one could I find calculated to give me the slightest relief. The thoughts of my family were stifled by the desolate remembrance of their estrangement; those of the monastery, and of the shadow of liberty I there enjoyed, were overcome by an innumerable host of bitter recollections, among which arose in gigantic form my unconquerable hatred to the monastic vow. Next, I considered the canonical laws. What relief could I hope for from them? was not the little which they possessed of justice and reason distorted for the purpose of making me a victim? The Cardinals and the Pope presented themselves to my imagination, but ever with a scornful and deriding laugh, like Democritus of old. The past, the present, and the future, seemed to be indissolubly linked to each other with a triple chain, on which I read nothing but misfortune! . . . The ever returning desire of liberty again assailed me, and if I sometimes endeavoured to deceive myself with the belief that after three days my torments would cease, a fearful cry immediately dissipated this only hope, repeating to me the mysterious "*that would be nothing*," thundered in my ears by the Jesuit.



Without giving a long and minute account of the manner in which I passed my wearisome days in this prison, let it suffice to say that they were spent in such reflections as the foregoing, and in listening to sermons that were preached to me four times a-day in the private chapel, by the Fathers Giuliani and Rossini. These discourses were directed to the pretended confutation of Protestantism, and I heard them gladly in the desire of learning the doctrines of the Reformed Church; but I had often occasion to observe how her wholesome principles could be distorted in the hands of the Jesuits. But what scruple can those have in making men speak after their own manner in order to draw their own advantages, who have not hesitated to make even God speak as suits their peculiar purposes.

In the meantime the miseries I endured were aggravated by the heat of the season, the wretchedness of the chamber, scantiness of food, and the rough severity of those by whom I was occasionally visited. Uncertainty as to when this imprisonment would be at an end almost drove me wild, and the first words I addressed to the Jesuits who approached me were, "Have the kindness to tell me, if you know, when I shall be permitted to leave this place?" One replied, "My son, think of hell." I interrogated another; the answer was, "Think, my son,

how terrible is the death of a sinner!" I spoke to a third, to a fourth, and one said to me, "My son, what will be your feeling, if on the day of judgment you find yourself on the left hand of God?" the other, "Paradise, my son, Paradise!" No one gave me a direct answer; their object appeared to be to mystify and confound me. After the first few days I began most severely to feel the want of a change of clothing. Accustomed to cleanliness, I found myself constrained to wear soiled apparel. The knowledge that this place was frequented by persons of every class, of every age, of every condition, who retired to it for spiritual exercise, under the guidance of the Jesuits, deterred me from getting into the little bed, where probably many of unsound health had often lain; I therefore slept, when overcome by fatigue, without taking off my clothes. As it is a usage among the Jesuits that all should wash at the same basin, and dry themselves on the same towel, I could not make up my mind to use those placed at my disposal. The idea of putting my face where so many Jesuits had put theirs, disgusted me; I preferred to remain dirty, and resolved not to wash at all: and for want of a comb my hair became rough and entangled.

After the fourth day my portion of food was diminished; a sign that they were pressing the siege, that it was their intention to



adopt both assault and blockade—to conquer me by arms, or induce me to capitulate through hunger. The Father Rossini visited my cell to learn what had been the effect of his polemical sermons. He questioned me closely concerning my faith, and having convinced himself that I still adhered to what I had protested before the two Cardinals, he resolved to make use of other means to arrive at his ends. In the sermon which followed this examination, he endeavoured to present to me the errors of the Romish Church in a less odious point of view; he armed himself with the shield of unity and of faith, placing the Pope as centre. I looked on the Bible rather as centre. To justify purgatory, he brought forward the usual scholastic distinctions of crime and punishment, and ran over the pages of the book of Divine justice, under pretence of making himself defender of the interests of God. I however knew that purgatory was a most fruitful field to satiate the avarice and secure the interest of the priests. He spoke of transubstantiation, of confession, of relics, of the adoration of images, of indulgences: but while he made an ostentatious display of subtle arguments, I fixed my mind on the true origin of such erroneous creeds, such superstitious practices, namely, the pride of the priesthood, who would arrogate to themselves a power almost divine, by means of the Eucharist, penance, and in-

dulgences; nor could I forget their avarice, which has led them to put consciences to contribution. There is a saying in Italy, that “He who speaks to the desert throws away the sermon.” So was it with the sermons of the Jesuits, so far at least as I was concerned.

One evening, after listening to a discourse filled with dark images of death, I returned to my room, and found the light set upon the ground. I took it up, and approached the table to place it there, but what was my horror and consternation at beholding spread out upon it a whitened skeleton! Before the reader can comprehend my dismay, it is necessary he should reflect for a moment on the peculiarities of childhood, especially in a Romish country, where children are seldom spoken to excepting in superstitious language whether by their parents or teachers: and domestics adopt the same style to answer their own purposes, menacing their disobedient charges with hobgoblins, phantoms, and witches. Such images as these make a profound impression on tender minds, leaving a panic terror which the reasoning of after years is often unable entirely to efface. There can be no doubt but that this pernicious habit is the fruit of the noxious plant fostered in the Vatican. Rising generations must be brought up to superstitious terror, in order to render them susceptible as to every kind of absurdity; for this



terror is the powerful spring employed by the priests and friars to move at their pleasure families, cities, provinces, nations. Although in families of the higher order this method of alarming infancy is much discountenanced, nevertheless it is impossible but that it should in some degree prevail in the nursery. Nor was it probable that I should escape this infectious malady, having passed my whole days in an atmosphere charged more than any other with that impure miasma, priestcraft.

At the sight of this skeleton, my limbs trembled; a cold perspiration stood on my forehead. Agitated and depressed by the mournful tenour of the sermon, and by the agonizing reflections to which for days past, I had been a prey, I regarded this spectre as a certain presage of approaching death. The candle fell from my hands, and was extinguished. The darkness which followed increased my fear; the skeleton seemed to stand erect, and to extend its arms towards me with a grim smile. I rushed towards the door, but as I was making my way out by the light of a lamp that was burning at the extremity of the corridor, I saw before me another spectre not less frightful, the Jesuit Giuliani. Thinking the occasion favourable, he hasted without delay, to strike the iron while hot; and with this skeleton before him, delivered to me a lengthened discourse on death.

Another evening, after a sermon on the judgment, a similar scene was prepared for me; but this second stratagem lost its effect, for I was now in constant expectation of some "Fratata" or other (so called in Rome, viz., the sacred representations employed by the friars in their missions, to overawe superstitious minds, and to draw, from weak women and hypocrites, declarations of false compunction and puerile conversions). The great picture of the universal judgment which was fixed in my room, during my absence, and rendered transparent by means of torches placed behind, instead of causing me alarm, rather afforded me amusement; for methought I could trace among the countenances of the devils and the condemned, some strong resemblances to the Jesuits. After this exhibition, I was doomed to listen to another tedious sermon, on the condemnation which would, on that great day, be pronounced on me for sins which I believed were not sins, but duties.

At another time I found an instrument of *discipline* on my bed. In this the good fathers showed themselves little acquainted with that figure in rhetoric termed "graduation." After having made me a victim to the most painful internal sufferings, to the most atrocious mental tortures, they presented me with a knot of cords, that I might therewith scourge my shoulders. After having tor-



mented me with a rod of iron, they presented to me a whip of feathers. Mental anguish and corporeal suffering will not bear a comparison. Besides which, how could they expect that I should desire to become my own executioner? The Father Giuliani did not, on this occasion, fail to inflict upon me another wearisome discourse, on the duty of mortification, equivalent to, at least, an hour's severe flagellation. When he had left me, I thought to myself,—The Jesuits must be insane to suppose that I shall make use of this instrument; and then followed the idea—How can they know whether I employ it or not? Do they see me? At this thought I looked round to examine if there were not in the walls some cunning invention similar to the ear of Dionysius, in the prisons of Syracuse. On raising my eyes to the ceiling, I perceived that, though the ear might be wanting, there was open the vigilant Jesuitical Eye, that is to say, a hole three or four inches square. I now felt certain that all my movements were observed from thence; but the knowledge of this did not induce me to make use of the discipline.

I had been shut up in this wretched place for thirteen days, when, one day, about noon, the Father Mislei, the author of all my miseries, entered my cell. At the sight of this man, resentment overcame every other consideration, and I advanced towards him fully

prepared to indulge my feelings, when he, with his usual smile, expressed, in bland words, his deep regret at having been the cause of my long detention in this retreat. "Never could I have supposed," added he, "that my anxiety for the salvation of your soul would have brought you into so much tribulation. But rest assured the fault is not entirely mine; you have yourself in a great degree, by your useless obstinacy, been the cause of your own sufferings. Ah, well, we will yet remedy all." Not feeling any confidence in his assurance, I burst out into bitter invectives and fierce words. He then renewed his protestations, and clothed them with such a semblance of honesty and truth, that when he ended with his tender conclusion, "Be assured, my son, that I love you," my anger vanished.

It is undoubtedly a great advantage to be endowed by nature with a feeling, open, and ingenuous heart; but even this blessing becomes a misfortune, when its possessor is surrounded by cunning men, deceivers, whose value is estimated by their power of fraud. I at once lost sight of the Jesuit, and thought I was addressing a man—a being capable of sympathizing in the distresses of others. "Ah, well, Father Mislei, in my situation I have need of some one on whom to rely—some one towards whom I can feel kindly, and therefore I am induced to place con-



fidence in your protestations. I now ask for a proof of the sincerity of your words, a proof which you can easily give, for it is in accordance with the laws both human and divine."

"Speak, my son, I am come here to do for you all that is in my power. What do you desire?"

"That you will convey a letter from me to my mother."

"I am only sorry you demand so little; be assured I will not fail in serving you. Is it written?"

"Not yet, but if you will have the kindness to wait a moment, you shall have it quickly."

I then wrote as follows:—

*From the house of S. Eusebio,  
Aug. 9th, 1841.*

Dearest Parents, Brothers, and Sisters,—  
These are the last words of your son, of your brother. I die—and death, which would be less terrible to me did it come from a strange hand, will be most bitter, coming as it does from you. I have no other hope of deliverance than that which God offers to the unfortunate—the peace of the tomb. Though you renounce me as a son, as a brother, I love you still; and that with an affection more holy, more pure, since it is not engendered by flesh and blood, but comes from God. Benedictions, not curses, will proceed from

my lips. I shall die, but the assurance that my blood will be shed in testimony of the truth, will support me at the sacrificial altar to which I am being dragged by the Romish Inquisition. Had I bowed my head to the iniquitous idol, instead of condemning me to punishment, they would have peaceably guided me on to honour, pride, and luxury. And this was your advice. But to have obeyed you, I must have resisted the stirrings of the Holy Spirit; and whether "man is to be obeyed rather than God, judge ye." May God illumine your hearts, and mitigate your feelings of remorse for having sacrificed a son, a brother! That I may, at least, if not on earth, see you again in heaven, is the prayer of

Your deceived

RAFFAELE CIOCCI.

Scarcely had I put the letter into the hands of Mislei, than he turned towards me with an air of kind concern, saying, "By the by, I had almost forgotten the best part of my errand. His Eminence, the Cardinal Castacani, has commissioned me to inform you that he is anxious you should leave this place, and to inquire if you are yourself desirous of doing so."

"If I desire it? What a strange question! You might as well ask a condemned soul whether he is desirous of escaping from hell!"



At these words the Jesuit started, like a goaded animal, and, forgetting his mission of deceiver, knitting his brows and compressing his lips, he allowed his ferocious soul for one moment to appear; but having grown old in deceit, he immediately had the circumspection to give his movement of rage the appearance of religious zeal, and exclaimed, "What comparisons are these? Are you not ashamed to assume the language of the atheist? By speaking in this way you clearly manifest how little you deserve to quit this place. But since I have told you that I love you, I will give you a proof of it, by thinking no more of these irreligious expressions; they shall be as forgotten as though they had never been spoken. Well, then, the Cardinal proposes to you an easy way of returning to your monastery."

"What does he propose?"

"Here is the way," said he, presenting me with a paper; "copy this with your own hand, and nothing more will be required of you."

I took the paper with convulsive eagerness. It was a recantation of my faith, there condemned as erroneous, and was couched in these words:—

"I, Raffaele Ciocchi, a Benedictine and Cistercian monk, inexperienced in theological doctrines, having, in good faith and without malice, fallen into the errors of the Protest-

ants, and being now illumined and convinced, recognise my errors. I retract them, I reject them, and declare the Roman Church to be the true Catholic and Apostolic Church of Jesus Christ. I bind myself, therefore, to teach and to preach according to her doctrines, being ready even to shed my blood for her sake. In conclusion, I ask pardon of all those to whom my Anti-Catholic, heterodox discourses may have been an occasion of stumbling. And I pray God to pardon me my sin."

Upon reading this, I shuddered, and, starting to my feet, in a solemn attitude and with a firm voice, exclaimed, "Kill me, if you please; my life is in your power; but never will I subscribe to that iniquitous formulary." The Jesuit, after labouring in vain to persuade me to his wishes, went away in anger.

I now momentarily expected to be conducted to the torture. Whenever I was taken from my room to the chapel, I feared lest some trap-door should open beneath my feet; and therefore took great care to tread in the footsteps of the Jesuit who preceded me. No one, acquainted with the Inquisition, will say that my precaution was needless. My imagination was so filled with the horrors of this place, that even in my short, interrupted, and feverish dreams, I beheld daggers and axes glittering around me; I heard the noise of the wheels; saw burning piles and



heated irons, and woke in convulsive terror, only to give myself up to gloomy reflections, inspired by the reality of my situation, and the impressions left by these nocturnal visions. What tears did I shed in those dreary moments ! How innumerable were the bitter wounds that lacerated my heart ! My prayers seemed to me unworthy to be received by the God of charity, because, notwithstanding all my efforts to banish from my soul every feeling of resentment towards my persecutors, hatred returned with redoubled power. I often repeated the words of Christ, "Father, forgive them, for they know not what they do ;" but immediately a voice would say—"This prayer is not intended for the Jesuits ; they resemble not the crucifiers, who were blind instruments of the rage of the Pharisees : these men are fully conscious of what they are doing ; they are the modern Pharisees." The reading of the Bible would have afforded me great consolation, but of that I was deprived.

The following day, which was the fourteenth of my imprisonment, the Father Giuliani entered my room, and announced to me that the council was assembled to pronounce judgment upon me, and that it was necessary I should attend. Pale and trembling, like one being dragged to the edge of a rock to be precipitated therefrom, I unwillingly followed him, stopping at almost every step to free

myself, if possible, from the grasp of the hand with which he tightly held my arm. He conducted me to an apartment where the Father Mislei, with three others, was seated at a table. Giuliani joined them ; I was made to sit down. They interrogated me at intervals, and urged me to sign the form of recantation sent by Castracani. I persisted in my refusal, and they proceeded to communicate to me the sentence. The Father Rossini spoke.

"You are decided ; let it be then as you deserve. Rebellious son of the Church ; in the fulness of the power which she has received from Christ, you shall feel the holy rigour of her laws. She cannot permit the tares to infect the field on which grows the good seed. She cannot suffer you to remain among her sons, and become a stumbling-block for the ruin of many. Abandon, therefore, every hope of leaving this place and of returning to dwell among the faithful. Know, all is finished for you."

Terrible moment ! As I record thee in these pages, thou again freezest the blood in my veins, and fallest upon my heart with a weight not less oppressive, though not from fear, but from a solemn, invincible, tormenting remorse—thou recallest to me my fall ! . . . A long silence ensued ; during this interval all the terrors that had taken possession of me during my retreat assailed me at once. The immoveable countenances of the Jesuits,



who, mute, cold, and insensible, appeared strangers to earth, and to every human affection, sunk deep into my heart, and convinced me that all was indeed finished for me. They did not once look at each other, perhaps lest they should remember they were men. I observed that one of them took down the words of Rossini, as he had previously taken down mine. Everything persuaded me that these bloody men were firmly resolved on my extermination. My courage gave way, and trembling I approached the table, seized the pen with a convulsive movement, and wrote . . . my shame ! . . . my condemnation ! . . . God of mercies, alas ! may this moment be blotted from my life ! Nevertheless, I bless the mysterious councils of thy justice and thy pity. Thou didst withdraw from me thy hand that I might know my weakness. Thou sawest my heart, and thou didst there perceive a sense of vanity in having received thy gift ; finding myself in the light of truth, I usurped the glory of a work entirely thine, attributing some merit to myself. Like Peter, I had relied on my own strength, I had said to thee, "Etiam, si opportuerit me mori, non te negabo ;" and, like Peter, I fell, I denied thee.

The Jesuits congratulated me, and informed me that the following day I should be at liberty to return to San Bernardo. "But," added the Father Mislei, "you must, as soon

as you return, go to the Cardinal Castracani, and present to him, with your own hand, the paper you have signed."

What testimony can I bring forward to all I endured in S. Eusebio, since those who witnessed my sufferings were Jesuits ? Can I invoke from the Jesuits testimony to the truth ? or either would they have any scruple in denying the truth ? Every one knows that they are supporters of mental reservation, that is to say, of the right of concealing the truth in long circumlocutions, and of making falsehood appear the better cause. But, however, besides the monks of San Bernardo, my servant, and the two spies who accompanied me, I can bring forward as witness to my having been for fifteen days a prisoner in this place, the Signor Giacinto Scifelli, Consul of the province of Frosinone. This gentleman, not seeing me in the monastery as usual, questioned the Superior concerning me, and received from him notice of my retreat. I can also bring forward a valuable witness in the person of the Cardinal Acton, then a Prelate. Though he is clothed in the purple of Rome, he has not, like too many, obtained his advancement through intrigue, and I invoke from him testimony to the truth. I am convinced he is not capable of falsehood ; for though he is in error and superstition, he errs from conviction, and the sign of the beast has not polluted his soul. I am ready to admit



that there are in the Romish Church deceivers and deceived—tyrants and victims—wolves and lambs.

On the following day I returned to the monastery, and, having obtained permission from the Superior, proceeded immediately to the residence of the Cardinal Castracani. I presented myself just as I had left S. Eusebio, emaciated, pale, my cheeks marked with tears, my hair in disorder, and my tunic with scarcely a trace of its original colour. I would not either change or arrange my dress; I preferred bringing before him, in my own person, a tacit but convincing proof of the cruelties inflicted during my imprisonment. He received the retractation from my hands, and placed it in the archives, at the same time praising me for the *docility* I had shewn. Thus, in Rome, even the signification of words is changed; weakness which yields to force is termed *docility*, and the *Yes* extorted by violence is called *consent*. Miserable condition of my country! where even language is falsified.

My brother, the priest, came, exulting, to embrace me, as soon as he knew that, having signed the retractation, I had obtained my liberty. He lavished upon me caresses and encomiums, with protestations of fraternal love. But his professions were distasteful to me; I was convinced that all he felt was satisfaction at seeing me overcome by perse-

cution. I imagined him repeating in his heart, "After this first fall, another push, and he will be secure."

I now availed myself of the permission granted me by the Superior, of leaving the monastery at pleasure, to pay frequent visits to my family. My mother's kind reception, and the affectionate congratulations of my sisters, brought me some consolation; but the voice of conscience loudly and incessantly reproached me with my cowardly fall, and embittered every pleasure. In vain did I endeavour to stifle remorse, with reflections of human prudence, which is foolishness in the sight of God. This voice always accompanied me—in society, in my family, in my scholastic duties—everywhere. The rein, that at first held me so tightly, was now slackened to such a degree, that had it not been for this Divine voice, which constantly recalled me to better thoughts, I might have contented myself with the inert and effeminate kind of life, which the monks of Italy generally lead, dividing themselves between God and mammon; giving to the former the shadow, and to the latter the substance of their devotion. But Divine mercy watched over my path, and it was not long ere a way of escape presented itself.



## LAST SOJOURN IN ROME.

MARCH, 1842.

IF personal liberty could have brought me happiness, the large share which I now enjoyed might have recompensed me for all my bondage. But, alas! this opening year was to me more bitter than any preceding one. The persecutions of the monks had ceased, but I was now tormented with the heavy weight of retributive justice. Remorse for having so weakly combated in the cause of truth—for having bent the knee to Baal—bowed down my soul. When pursued by men, I had ever found refuge in peace of conscience; and amidst the blackest tempests, celestial grace had given me light—had been to me a sun. But now that the voice of an offended God was continually sounding in my ears, embittering every worldly joy, I had no asylum—no, not even the sorrowful consolation of pouring my griefs into the bosom of a fellow-creature. Mine was a sorrow that must prey upon itself. I dared not to speak of my remorse, of my repentance for my vile apostasy from the truth, to those who smiled upon me—who caressed me solely because I had recanted, because I had apostatized, because they believed me one of their fold.

The least betrayal of my real sentiments would have drawn down upon me the bitterest rage of my most cruel enemies, and from that I shrunk. . . . Strange struggle between the flesh and the spirit! At times I felt myself urged openly to confess my faith; all dangers vanished before the sense of duty: but as the moment drew nigh that I had thought opportune for the reparation of my fault, these difficulties, which before had seemed but atoms, rose like mountains to my view, and courage fled. . . . The spiritual man was overcome by the carnal man.

God of goodness, who dost dispose with force and with mildness the operations of thy grace, thou didst sow in my heart the seed of thy holy word, and to the end that it might not be choked by the thorns—raising me from time to time from my fall—thou didst put into my heart a lively desire to amend my fault! Thou didst permit that I should sometimes remain prostrate under the weight of natural weakness, that I might at last burst all the ties that bound me to this land of my sin, to the country so dear to me, and dedicate myself to thy service in another land where liberty of conscience is not proscribed.

From the internal struggle, the idea so often conceived, but always rejected, of bidding adieu for ever to Rome, to Italy, to my family,



gained additional strength. This design was continually in my mind, and assisted to calm, in some degree, the agitation of my spirit. But how was flight to be accomplished? It was the hourly subject of my meditation, and the burden of every prayer.

The continued perusal of the Bible strengthened in me a desire, which had its origin in the persecutions I had myself endured, of solacing the unhappy beings groaning under the weight of misfortune. I passed my whole time in visiting the hospitals and prisons, and in comforting the distressed. How sweet it was to wipe away the tears of the mourner! In these moments the remembrance of my own sufferings proved an agreeable odour.

As I was one day walking on the road by the church of my college, two gentlemen came towards me, and politely inquired whether they could be permitted to view the garden. I offered to accompany them, and to give them the necessary information respecting the antiquity of the spot, which was the ancient circus of the baths of Dioclesian. After walking a short time, and conversing on the changes which, in the lapse of centuries, this monument of Roman grandeur had undergone, they asked me many questions concerning the Benedictine and Cistercian Order—as to their occupations, rules, studies, the hours of the choir, &c., &c. Not knowing who they were, and fearing treachery, I was circumspect in

my replies, and kept upon my guard, considering well my words. Having informed them, in answer to some inquiry, that the monastery in which I resided was the dwelling of the aged monks, and that the young men were living in the monastery of Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, both smiled, and one of them observed—

“Father, if the others are no older than yourself, those in Santa Croce in Gerusalemme must indeed be children.”

I answered, “Your observation, Sir, would be just, were they all of my age, but I am the only young man in this monastery.”

“Ah, I understand,” he resumed, “it is probably your choice to live among serious and experienced persons.”

I was on the point of uttering a candid—no—of freely relating the series of my sufferings, but was restrained by the idea that these strangers might be Roman Catholics. I therefore hesitated to reply, and at last said—“If my question be not impertinent, of what nation are you, gentlemen?”

“We are Englishmen,” said they.

The reply was a relief to my mind, but nevertheless I was not entirely re-assured, well knowing that there were Roman Catholics even in England. However, believing I might venture a few words upon my misfortunes, I said—“Oh no, it is not my choice to live here, it is a kind of punishment inflicted



on me. My story is too long to tell, and would be dangerous for me to relate, as it might awaken ancient persecutions were it to be known I had spoken of it."

"You need not fear us; we have no wish to bring you into trouble, but would rather console you, if it were in our power."

"Ah well, let it be with me as God wills." And I began briefly to relate how I had been sacrificed and betrayed into assuming the monastic habit; but I was silent on my aversion to Romanism, on my recent sufferings, and on the recantation forced from me by the Jesuits.

"Are you not, then, satisfied to be a monk? How is it? You appear to want nothing requisite to the leading an easy life. According to what you have stated, your house is magnificent, your table well provided for, you have liberty at discretion, and beautiful walks in this delightful garden. You have no cares—no embarrassments of any kind."

"Surely you are not speaking seriously. I cannot suppose that reasonable persons like yourselves can approve a kind of life without thought, without care, while you know that we are sent into this world to be useful to each other. And even were this the easiest life imaginable, it could never be relished by me—less terrible would it be to languish in chains in the castle of S. Angelo."

The two strangers looked at each other with astonishment, and probably the suspicions which I had entertained of them now took possession of their minds with regard to myself, and they perhaps thought it was my object to discover their sentiments. In Rome the English are closely watched by the authorities, and were any among them discovered seeking to propagate the Bible, they would be subjected to much annoyance.

However, the stranger continued—"Your situation is indeed cruel; but why do you not have recourse to the canonical laws, which have provided for cases like yours? Why do you not invoke the countenance and support of your family?"

"Do you suppose I have not done this? Oh yes! but all has been in vain. They here wrest the laws according to their own wishes, and follow them only when it answers their purpose." I then hastily informed them of the appeal made to the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars—of the iniquitous sentence signed by the Pope—and the estrangement of my family.

The two foreigners, after having heard this story of grief, though most imperfectly related, for I did not venture to touch on Protestantism or go into detail in any particular, conversed with each other for a few minutes in their own language. Though English was totally unknown to me, I comprehended these



four words, "*horrible, injustice, Roman Catholic,*" and they were vivid lamps, which burst the clouds, and showed me the path on which I was treading. I perceived that these gentlemen not only pitied me, but were filled with holy indignation against that spirit of oppression by which I had been immolated. This discovery gave me courage, and I said,

"Gentlemen, excuse my importunity, but it appears to me that you sympathize in my misfortune. You do not, I think, belong to the Church of Rome?"

"No, we are Protestants," they replied.

On hearing this, my countenance beamed with joy, and I quickly disclosed to them the peculiarities of my situation. They soon after left me, leading me to hope I should see them again; in which I was not disappointed.

A month passed away after this interview, without my again seeing these gentlemen, and I had begun to fear that I was forgotten by them; when one day as I was crossing towards the church, a gentleman saluted me; I approached and recognised in him one of my two friends. I offered to show him the monastery, to which he acceded. Having seen the whole of the edifice he accompanied me to my apartment, where we spoke openly of religion, the subject being induced from the sight of a Bible on my table. The manner in which I spoke of this divine book convinced him of my sincerity, and I perceived

with emotion, tears of joy glistening in his eyes. He asked if I could sometimes visit him at his house, and I engaged to do so.

The following week I was enabled to fulfil my promise. Faithful as I knew my servant to be, I did not dare to confide to him the motive of my visit, for the subtle priests of Italy exercise their influence equally over sons, brothers, friends, and servants. Nevertheless, I allowed him to accompany me as usual, but left him at the entrance of the house, there to await my return.

It was not long after this period that I came to the resolution of escaping for ever from my painful situation, by abandoning my country. This was a bold and decisive step, and presented many formidable difficulties. The first and most hard to be overcome was the procuring a passport; but, however, suffice it to say, that after two days I was in possession of one regularly made out for Leghorn, in the name of my servant. I had now firmly made up my mind to remain only a few days longer in Italy; but, nevertheless, so agitated were my spirits, so many were the daggers which pierced my heart at the thought of abandoning all dearest to me on earth, my family, my country, that my resolution must have failed, had not that Divine Providence which ordained my emancipation from moral servitude, mercifully vouchsafed me strength for the conflict.



Some time had now elapsed since I had been into the library; but on the afternoon of Easter Monday I visited it, and was astonished on opening the door to see innumerable pieces of paper scattered on the floor. I took up several of the fragments, and found them to be my own writings, portions of the papers I had deposited in the library, during the time of my studying there. All the papers belonging to me were entirely torn up and destroyed. This new cruelty, this unheard-of vexation, this ferocious vandalism, revealed the bitter hatred that existed towards me in the hearts of the implacable monks. These writings were of no value; I intended to leave them behind me, and had not even thought of them, in the grief which I felt at quitting my beloved parents and country; but to see them thus destroyed by persons ignorant of my approaching departure, caused me real pain. This was revenge for the past, and anticipation for the future.

I went to the Superior to demand satisfaction for so iniquitous an action, but he coolly told me that he could not divine the guilty one, and would not punish all for the fault of a single person. This refusal to institute the necessary inquiries for the discovery and punishment of the offender, added fuel to the fire already kindled, and was a new incentive to flight from a place where I was daily subjected to fresh outrages.

I at once fixed my departure for the following Thursday, and under pretext of demanding justice for the injury done to me, I immediately proceeded to Santa Croce in Gerusalemme. The ill-treatment which I had in the course of six years received from the monks had exasperated me against the whole Order, and more particularly against the heads and principal instruments of oppression; but it had not stifled in my breast the kindlier feelings of our nature. Thanks be to God I had not become a misanthrope. I nourished a sincere affection for all those who had shown themselves humane towards me, especially for the young men with whom I had so long dwelt, and with whom I had taken the habit, and had a strong desire to see them once more before setting out for ever. They were surprised and confounded at my extraordinary conduct on this occasion. I found it impossible to restrain my sighs and tears, and the disquietude and distress depicted on my countenance, as I pressed their hands for the last time, led them to suppose that I was either menaced with some fresh persecution, or that some internal change had taken place which induced me finally and entirely to give myself up to the sacerdotal state. Their anxious interrogations served to convince me of their belief, and at the same time to strengthen my determination of withdrawing myself from all further persecution, by fleeing from a con-



taminated and tyrannical scene of priestcraft.

During the two days preceding my flight, the monks in the monastery of San Bernardo were excessively anxious to learn the cause of my dejection. They whispered their belief that it arose from apprehensions of new persecution, and with malignant joy, they watched every word and action, with the hope of receiving some confirmation of their suspicions.

As I was returning from Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, agitated at parting from those beloved youths who had shared my griefs and sympathized with my sufferings, God placed in my way another stimulant to follow out my project of leaving Italy. Impelled by curiosity to visit the church of San Gregorio, a Monte Celio, which was at that time gorgeously decorated, the preparations having been some time before made, for the solemnization of the festival of the saint from whom it receives its name, I turned in that direction. At the entrance of the monastery was standing the gilded equipage and pompous cortège of the "Servant of the servants of God." I entered the monastery to visit a monk of my acquaintance, when in one of the corridors, I found myself in the presence of the Pope, who was accompanied by several monks, two of whom were of my Order. These monks made me a sign to kneel and kiss "the most holy foot." The golden image, set up by Nebuchadnezzar,

before which the captive Israelites were commanded to bend the knee, presented itself to my imagination. What, thought I, would the three children who preferred being cast into the furnace rather than to commit such an abomination, think of this act of adoring Antichrist? Upon the shoe was the sign of the cross; I kissed it with the intention of rendering homage to the Redeemer, but with feelings of sorrow for the outrage offered him by his self-styled Vicar, who places on his foot the visible signs of redemption, and tramples under his feet its precious fruits. Having gone through this humiliating ceremony, a burning blush overspread my cheek; I remembered the iniquitous sentence recorded against me, and signed by Gregory XVI. Yes, I will leave all, said I, urged by contempt, shame, and remorse. Never again will I behold the "abomination of desolation;" I will expiate in another land the transgression of having bowed my head to this Man of Sin, to this idol of pride.

What a night of anguish was the one preceding my last visit to my family! How many mournful images crowded on my mind! I could not close my eyes in sleep. I fancied I saw around my bed my father, mother, and sisters, bathed in tears, in the act of supplicating my stay, reminding me of the affection and sympathy I had received from them in times more congenial: then again I saw



them entreating pardon for the suffering they had so involuntarily occasioned. Oh! my brain but resembled a busy ant-hill; here, there, and everywhere were my thoughts, like those little animals, who meet, push, and cross each other in their unceasing labours. My ideas came in groups; they rushed against each other, intermingled, disappeared, then returned, each one mingling in the secret recesses of my heart something of bitterness and woe.

Morning came. Wearied and distressed, with a mind fatigued with reflecting on the past, and groping amidst the shadows of the future, I arose, and sought in my Bible and in prayer, strength, guidance, refreshment, and consolation. Flight was too deeply graven in my heart to be rooted up by the conflicting tempest caused by tender family affections; but nevertheless the near prospect of separation had somewhat unnerved me, and I had need to strengthen myself to the utmost for the approaching shock. I prayed, therefore, with that fervour which imminent danger inspires; I prayed as prays a mariner on the point of shipwreck; like the condemned at the approach of his last hour. "Lord!" I exclaimed, "thou hast implanted in my bosom the love of my relatives and friends; but thou hast commanded us to leave father, mother, brothers, riches, and country, for the kingdom of heaven's sake. Since thou hast

inspired me with a desire to follow thy holy laws, give me now strength to fulfil thy will. I ask it in the name of thy Son, who left his mother, and was not kept back by the idea of the agony he might occasion her, to glorify thee among the doctors in the temple." After praying, I seemed to be inspired with new courage, and without further delay, accompanied by my servant, I set out for my paternal home, where I remained the whole day.

To relate all I suffered during those hours, the thoughts that distracted me, the emotions with which I had to contend, is no easy task. Who has ever been able to describe the state of a heart agonized by various passions, all-powerful, imperious, invincible? What eloquence can describe that which passes in the soul during those solemn and decisive moments, when every thought is a story of grief—every sensation the summary of the whole life,—every sigh the mysterious voice of a future, foreboding only inexpressible trouble? Alas! when I recall to mind that day, I tremble with horror, I weep with anguish, and am at once astonished that I did not yield to the insinuations of the flesh against the Spirit. . . . But this triumph was not mine, it was of "Grace."

The paleness of countenance occasioned by a sleepless night, added to the conflict I had undergone in preparing myself for this farewell visit, drew from my mother and sisters,



when I entered their presence, anxious inquiries whether I was ill, or had met with anything to distress me. It was in vain I declared I was well, and that nothing sinister menaced me; the embarrassment of my manner, my faint and tremulous voice, my eyes suffused with tears, repressed sighs, and dejected deportment, betrayed the secret of my heart. My youngest sister beset me with her dear little hands, now to wipe away my tears, now to press my hand—constantly repeating, in a tone of reproach, “If anything has occurred to trouble you, why not tell it to Mamma? why not to Papa? if you will not tell it to me; and yet you know how dearly I love you.” The innocent girl knew not it was on that account I suffered, and that love for the family was the thorn which pierced my very soul. A few months before, when I was suffering under the weight of their estrangement, this step would not have been nearly so trying. Meanwhile, my mother, whom my continued silence confirmed in her suspicion that I was labouring under some pressing grief, fixed her looks on me, and endeavoured to read in my eyes, when directed towards her, all that was passing in my mind. This look was like the electric lightning; it struck me, stupified, annihilated me. There was something of divination about it, and I thought her eye would have penetrated my heart’s core. She

wept. On seeing these tears of maternal love flowing down her cheeks, it seemed as though, conscious of my design, she would (have said,) “Ungrateful son! is it thus you leave? thus you forget me?” I avoided looking at her, and studiously kept silence, excepting when, from time to time, in order to give a turn to the sorrowful course of my ideas, and to relieve the pressure of their own, I addressed a few questions to one or other of my family. I endeavoured to force a smile, but I know not how it adapted itself to my lips on that day; I only know, that instead of cheering these sorrowing ones, it drew from their eyes fresh tears, and awoke fresh sighs in their bosoms; I only know that I felt weaker for the effort, and fell into still deeper dejection. A smile, on the lips of the afflicted, is a lament. My father contemplated me in silence, and at length thinking my unhappiness arose from weariness and abhorrence of the cloistral life, he endeavoured to give me comfort by saying that I might possibly yet return home. To speak of the cloister was to reanimate my drooping courage, and to strengthen me in my last resolve. The conduct of my brother, the priest, was also calculated to produce this effect. He alone, while all were rendered unhappy by my unaccountable demeanour, showed himself perfectly indifferent to what was passing, apathetically pursuing his occupations in an adjoining apartment. He was



a "Romish priest," a term synonymous with "egotist."

The priest is an official in the Romish Church originating with the Pope. He is a man who has no link in society, and who cares for it only to oppress and make it sterile; he is a man whose heart is closed to those tender affections which serve to modify and subdue the fury of tempestuous passions; he is one who professes to renounce the moderate love of himself (which, however, is of Divine origin), and pretends to make himself an example of charity towards his neighbour; while Jesus Christ places the love of ourselves as a standard for the love of our neighbour.

Pardon me this digression. I will proceed with my narrative.

I reflected, I shall never see these dear ones again! This is the last time their voices will penetrate my heart! But their voices to-day are not sweet, their words do not fall like honey-drops on my ear, they are bitter as wormwood! Oh, alas! I have not then the consolation of enjoying the sweetness of these voices, so dear, this last, last time! In the countries where I am going there will be none to love me with an affection so tender, so necessary, so irresistible! There will be no threshold on which, as I place my foot, I can say, "Now, quick, they expect me; each delay may cause the mater-

nal heart to beat—may bring uneasiness to relatives;" O desolating idea! thou resemblest the eternal ice of the valleys that environ the summit of Mont Blanc, where the friendly rays of the sun never penetrate!! These reflections haunted me throughout the day, and stifled every other that I sought to encourage.

The moment for my return to the monastery drew nigh. "Good night," said my father, "it is already half-past nine o'clock, the hour established by the rule." "Good night," repeated my mother; "Go, my son, do not give the Superiors reason to complain of you, but come often and see us." . . . Here I was on the point of throwing myself into her arms and confessing all—fortunately for me grief choked my utterance, but, pressing her hand, I sobbed, "Adieu!" This word signified, we shall see each other again in the bosom of God. Thrice I prepared to leave, yet still lingering I stayed, to gaze once more, by turns, on my father, mother, and sisters. At last, in a suffocating tone, I said to them, "Salute me for all my relations and friends;" and then, almost running, descended the stairs, with a swollen heart and trembling knees, and, as soon as I had entered the carriage, burst into an agony of tears. My servant, who had been interrogated as to the cause of my unusual behaviour, could only answer that he believed I



was ill. I gazed through my tears for the last time on those walls that held the beings so dear to me, which contained so many sweet remembrances. . . . Exhausted by the violence of the struggle, I had absolute need of repose, and this night mine was rather lethargy than sleep.

The next morning, I visited all in the monastery who had been kind to me, among whom I am bound to name D. Candido Laurenzi. He observed my emotion, which was uncontrollable, but being unable to comprehend the cause, he could only, with the monks, ascribe this depression of spirits to grief at being again about to surrender myself to the Inquisition.

I afterwards wrote a prayer, and a letter addressed to the monks. In the first, which I left in my room, on the praying-desk, I expressed myself as follows:—

“Merciful God! thou hast called; I obey, and submit to thy Divine will. Confirm in me that which thou hast begun. Be thou my guide in this journey, and let thy holy angels guard me on the road which thou markest out. Protect me against those who would follow me but to plunge me again into that darkness from which I have been drawn by thy hand. Blind the eyes of the agents of Government, that I may escape from their hands. Thou seest my heart, and thou knowest that nothing but the

desire of leading a new life, according to the precepts of thy Gospel, induces me to abandon my relations and country. Enable me to put off the old man Adam, and to rise again in faith. Hear the prayer which I make to thee for my enemies, whom I forgive. Oh, may my flight serve as a warning to them not henceforth to be harsh and implacable with youth—may they be no longer deceivers!”

In the letter which I stuck conspicuously in the bookcase in my room, I wrote the following farewell:—

“Masters and monks, I leave you—we shall probably never see each other again on earth. May God bestow on you a portion of that grace which he has so mercifully vouchsafed to me! May your minds be enlightened, and may we meet again in the heritage of the just! As a last favour, I ask that which you will not refuse if you have human hearts in your breasts. When my desolate parents shall come to inquire for their lost son, do not irritate the wound, do not increase their grief by bitter words, denouncing me as a heretic, a blasphemer, an apostate. ’Tis not for myself I thus implore you; your words will never reach my ears; it is for them, whose only fault is the having been too ready to gratify you by the sacrifice of their son.

“Companions, adieu; console, I entreat you, my poor mother; perhaps, on seeing you, she may think of me, and weep. Remember



how I have loved you, and rest assured your images will remain graven on my heart whithersoever I may wander.

"I thank all those who have given me instruction, and may the Lord reward them for their good intentions! I ask pardon of D. Candido Laurenzi for my estrangement from him during these last months of my remaining in the monastery. My heart suffered from it, but the insinuations of the Procurator-General, D. Girolomo Bottini, and of the Master, D. Giuseppe Martini, caused me to believe him my secret and bitter enemy. I am now convinced of my error, and know him to be the only one among the monks who has sincerely loved me. Farewell, and may the peace of God remain with you all!"

I thought that, having taken leave of my family and friends, I had overcome the greatest trial; but, alas! I had yet to find that forsaking one's country was the supreme grief. Separation from those to whom we are bound by nature, by disposition, and by habit, is sufficiently trying to a feeling heart; but the reflection that those whom we love tread the same soil, and breathe the same air as ourselves, serves to forge links in the chain which distance cannot sever. We are, from childhood, accustomed to consider that death may divide us from our parents and friends, and that one day we may live, while they sleep in the quiet of the tomb; but no associa-

tion of ideas, at any period of our lives, ever teaches us that our country may pass away from us. Oh! to see it for ever vanish from the sight, is indeed an ocean of agony! Should the bitter, scalding tears of the exile fall on these pages, they alone will express the inestimable value of this word *country*, so little understood by those who have never lost their own. The blessings contained in this word are easily enumerated; everything—out of it, nothing, excepting God and peace of conscience.

I quitted the monastery, and went to the house of the only friend who knew of my project. Here I laid aside the monastic habit, and adopted a dress in accordance with the station indicated in the passport.

I hired a carriage and set out for Civita-Vecchia. Each step the horses took struck a blow at my heart. I was, however, still in Rome. This thought, which had hovered around me, dissipating a little the feverish heat by which I was consumed, soon gave place to feelings of inexpressible anguish. I had lost her for ever! I was still endeavouring to solace myself with the remembrance that I was yet in Italy, when, outside the Porta Cavalleggieri, the sad prospect of the Roman desert burst on my sight. These fields, but a few miles distant from Rome, on which no habitation is to be seen, deserted and wretched, accorded well with the state of



my mind, and my thoughts found there an echo. In order to give a turn to the reflections which, during two days' travelling, had crushed my heart, I began to meditate on what these fields once were, which I now beheld so lonely, neglected and devoid of vegetation, images of a government that corrupts morals and enchains mind.

I was compelled to remain at Civita-Vecchia four days, awaiting the arrival of the Sardinian steam-packet, in which I was to sail for Leghorn. On entering the church of S. Francesco, the day after my arrival, I read my name at the foot of the calendar—D. Raffaele Ciocchi, a Cistercian monk, an apostate. Anxiety lest I should fall into the hands of the blood-hounds despatched from Rome in pursuit of me, served greatly to divert the overwhelming grief occasioned by abandoning my relatives and country. I adopted every method of precaution to elude their vigilance, but could not think myself secure under my disguise.

Ignorant of the laws and regulations of most countries, nay even of the laws of Rome herself, excepting as they were in connexion with the peculiarities of my own position, I was, when I fled from the monastery, like a chicken scarcely out of its shell. Had I been aware of the movements of the French packets in the ports of Italy, and of the security which any one on leaving her shores enjoys, pro-

tected under the banner of a free people, I could have spared myself much risk, and might have been relieved from the dreadful state of perplexity and fear in which I continued till my arrival in London. Instead of hazarding my flight on the thirtieth of March, had I set out on the sixth of the following month, I might have placed myself in safety on board a French vessel sailing from Malta for Marseilles on the eighth. Of these particulars I was ignorant, nor should I now mention them, but for the hope that this narrative may fall into the hands of some persons to whom such information may prove useful.

After a few days of anxious suspense the vessel arrived, and I was received on board the "Maria Antoinetta." When it was dark I went on deck; after looking around to ascertain that I was unobserved, I threw my tunic, from whence had sprung all my misery, into the sea. Thus did I dispose of the only ensign of Popery which remained to me.

Being arrived at Leghorn, I had great difficulty in getting my passport signed; but at length, having overcome all impediments, I embarked in the French steam-packet, "The Sully," for Genoa. Here I imprudently availed myself of the permission given to land, and thus exposed myself to the risk of being discovered by the numerous Jesuits who pace the streets of that city. I saw many whom I had known in Rome, but no



one recognised me, my face being half concealed by a handkerchief, which I wore as a protection from the piercing winds that blew furiously on that day. When I left Genoa my heart was wrung afresh, for this was the last *Italian* soil on which I trod.

At Marseilles I might have shaken off the chagrin and fear I experienced in having to travel with a false passport, but, alas! I knew not that there was any way of escaping from this embarrassment. Here again would I render service to any unhappy inexperienced Italian who may be inspired with a desire to escape from his oppressors. Let him know that as soon as he arrives in a free country he can resign his false passport, and presenting himself to the local authorities, he may disclose his name, country, condition, and motives, whether religious or political, for seeking elsewhere an asylum, resting assured that no persecution awaits him on that head. I, on the contrary, under the impression that the Pope exercised the same influence in France as in Italy, believed myself still in the clutches of my enemies, and supposing myself compelled to pursue my journey with the same passport, I had, in addition to the horrors of the Pope, to contend with the vigilance of the French Government. Better information on these points would have spared me the anxiety I endured in presenting myself to the Roman Consul for his signature.

This functionary, on reading among the notices "age thirty-one," fixed a searching glance on me, saying—

"Is it possible you can be thirty-one years of age?"

At this, having foreseen the difficulty, I manifested great surprise, and boldly said—"I am but just twenty-one."

"But it is here plainly written as I tell you."

"I cannot say how this mistake has arisen. In every other respect the passport is correct, and a little error on the part of the person who has written the description ought not to interfere with my affairs."

"But I must fulfil my duty by taking cognisance of this discrepancy. I am not satisfied with your passport, and you must remain here for a few days until I have received an answer from Rome to the inquiries which I shall make respecting you; unless indeed you can give reference to any person residing at Marseilles."

Here the custom-house officer who had accompanied me interposed, saying to the Consul, "Sir, I can bear witness that the English Consul, to whom this person has recommendations, received him with every mark of attention."

At these words the clouded brow of the Consul of Rome cleared up, and on seeing him affix the necessary signature, my mind



became calm. His threat of detaining me at Marseilles till he had received information from Rome, sounded terrible to my ears. From the erroneous impression under which I was labouring, it was equivalent to falling again into the gripe of the Roman tyrants; and although I should have escaped the danger I apprehended, yet had he carried out his intention, a fearful one menaced me from the rigour of the French laws towards those who make use of false passports. However, the Roman Consul was satisfied; and I hastened my departure that I might avoid further unpleasant occurrences.

In Paris I did not present myself at the nunciature, as I had been commanded by the Roman Consul at Marseilles. My passport, therefore, only being good so far as Paris, I had at Boulogne-sur-Mer again numerous difficulties to contend with.

Behold me, at last, after so many storms, arrived in a port of safety—behold me in London. Here all may naturally suppose my persecutions at an end; for Papal power extends not the tyranny of force over this land of liberty, protected by wise laws and a free religion. But though violence cannot harm me, treachery has many times assailed me. The serpent which cannot bite has sought to poison. Harassed and exhausted, I at length found in Wood's Hotel, Furnival's-inn, where I had been recommended, that

repose of which I stood in so much need. For ten days I here enjoyed comparative peace, under the Christian kindness of the proprietor and excellent family of this well-known establishment.

An Italian, forced by imperious circumstances from his native soil, knowing nothing of the language of the country where he takes refuge, in the midst of persons entirely strangers, surrounded by objects entirely new, with the recollections of his own dear country floating in his imagination, is exactly in the situation of a prisoner who, having been translated to a dungeon while in a state of torpor, on recovering from his lethargy, opens his eyes with dismay to the confounding objects around him. When I say that I lived in peace, it must not be understood that I was cheerful, happy; my comfort consisted in being free, in having followed the impulse of conscience, and I was at peace with God. I spent the greater part of my time in reading a Bible in the Italian language, which had been kindly provided by Mr. Wood for me.

This quiet soon met with an interruption in the form of a call from Dr. Baldacconi, Chaplain of the Sardinian Chapel in London. The object of this person's visits was to draw me, if possible, into his trammels; but God was pleased to deliver me from his contrivances. In reply to his numerous inquiries, I related to him my story, and declared my



firm desire of belonging only to Christ, of following the precepts of the Gospel, and not the inventions of the Church of Rome. It is impossible to describe the furious gesticulations and vehement expressions of this Reverend gentleman on hearing me speak with so little respect of his idol. To his misfortune, this gentleman is little able to control his temper. I, however, did not suffer myself to be affected by his violence; indeed, his passion tended rather to confirm me in my opinions, for I saw in him an exact copy of the Cistercian monks and Jesuits, by whom I had been ill treated in Rome. He spoke of the excommunications I had incurred, and drew so terrific a picture of their consequences that, had I been entirely a stranger to the thunderbolts forged in the Vatican, I should perhaps have thrown myself at his feet and implored absolution; for he declared he had the power to grant it me in the name of God. He at length left me, convinced of the inutility of his efforts to terrify me into concessions, having heard from my own lips that I cared not for Papal excommunications.

On the second visit he hoped, with better success, to employ persuasive means, and came accompanied by the Signor Barelli, an Italian merchant, established in London. He informed me he had received letters from the Cardinals Acton and Lambruschini, from the Superior of the Cistercian Order, and also

from my parents, who, he said, were clothed in the deepest mourning on account of my spiritual death. He sought to gain me by numerous artifices, stating that complete secularization might be obtained for me, and that I could be furnished with all necessary funds, he having received from Rome orders to that effect. His grand aim was to induce me to return to Rome; and when I would not so much as hear this spoken of, he suggested that I should go to Turin, a kingdom governed by Jesuits. On finding that I had no confidence in any Italian government, he contented himself with proposing to me Germany or France. I considered England was the only secure asylum for me, and intimated that no human force should drag me from its hospitable shore. My indefatigable interrogator then proposed that I should go to Ireland, to a monastery of the Cistercians, merely to await my secularization from Rome; but as the idea of monkhood stirred my blood, he in the end recommended that I should retire to the college of Oscott, near Birmingham, regulated by Dr. Wiseman. He was much delighted to find that I gave a little heed to this last proposal, the reasons which he assigned for it appearing plausible and just.

“You must,” said he, “if you remain in the country, make yourself acquainted with the English language. You can be an inmate



of the college as long as may be necessary for you to acquire that knowledge, and you can then, if you choose to do so, employ yourself in giving instruction in your own language. Rest assured you will be well treated in this college, and that my intentions towards you are perfectly upright. I have no other wish than to do you good."

Several conversations of this kind, held with Dr. Baldacconi, at length began to have their influence; and I know not but that I might have fallen a victim to his manœuvres had I not been withheld by a friendly hand. However, on perceiving the treachery that lurked beneath the veil of charity assumed by this Romish priest, I became completely estranged from him. Finding how little chance there was of getting me into his power, he complained in a letter, which is still in my possession, that I had made him appear a liar before the Cardinals Acton and Lambruschini, to whom, anticipating events, he had announced that the bird was in the cage.

Among the frequent opportunities I had of judging of this man's character, in no instance was it more fully developed than in a conversation which passed between us respecting the gratuitous Italian School, established by Italian philanthropists in London, No. 5, Greville-street, Hatton-Garden. I had been conducted there one evening by a servant of the hotel at which I was staying, who kindly

thought it would give me pleasure to see Italian faces, and that among my compatriots I might possibly find a little relief from the melancholy and weariness with which, from my isolated state of existence, he saw me oppressed. The next day, meeting with Dr. Baldacconi, I mentioned the circumstance to him, expecting to hear him respond to the sentiments awakened in my mind by so useful and so wise an Institution, the object of which is the instruction of the poor wandering Italians; at the same time instilling into their minds the love of their country, and leading them on in the road of improvement. The following is the substance of what passed between us.

"How!" said Dr. Baldacconi, "have you been to Pistrucci's school?"

"Yes; I was there yesterday evening."

"What did they say to you?"

"Nothing for which I ought not to thank those well-disposed persons. They showed me every attention, and I have reason to believe them sincere in their professions of being useful to me, should I find myself in circumstances to need their assistance."

"How," he resumed, in a movement of great excitement, "how came you to think of entering that den of outlaws? how is it that you speak to me in their favour?—but, however, you are but just arrived, and you as yet know nothing of this school of perdition."



“But it does not appear to me to be a school of perdition ; they teach reading, and writing, and—”

“There is taught the canker, the pest, the ruin of souls. There immorality marches triumphant ; the Pope and the bulls are evil spoken of, prohibited books read, governments abused ; and there are fomented insubordination and revolt.”

“Pardon me, I think that what you say of their immorality is not true ; and with regard to books, those they read are Silvio Pellico, Manzoni, the histories—”

“How ! not true ! Is it not immorality to deliver revolutionary discourses—to teach that the people have a right to raise tumults, to give laws to kings, to kill them ! to propagate anarchy, and to put into the heads of the Italians, who otherwise would never think of it, notions of liberty which are the ruin of nations and religion ? And are not these their motives for reading Pellico ? This book speaks throughout in a tone of resentment and hatred of the legitimate power, and is more mischievous than others, because it appears to be written with sentiments of moderation and Christian charity ; but I repeat to you, it is a canker, a pest ! Cankers and pests are those who direct the school, those who frequent it, those who speak in praise of it, those who defend it ! May the curse of God and the excommunication of the Pope rest upon them !

As for me, could I destroy it altogether, believe me, I would not hesitate for one moment to do so.”

He might have spared himself this last expression ; for the paroxysm of rage into which he was thrown, but too clearly revealed the sincerity of his impotent wish.

This conversation had much to do with a resolution I formed to hold myself aloof from a man who thus openly avowed himself the defender of tyranny, and dared to tax with iniquity and immorality a school where they spoke of liberty and patriotic love. I was confirmed in the persuasion, that the religion of the Pope, in deifying tyranny, was diametrically opposed to the spirit of the Gospel, and I had many opportunities of being convinced of the tyrannical spirit animating the Church of Rome, in whatever part of the globe she exists.

At the time that Dr. Baldacconi was so sedulously spreading his snares for my entanglement, I had, as I have already intimated, the good fortune to receive the timely aid and counsel of the Hon. and Rev. Baptist W. Noel, with whom I then became acquainted.

Hearing from me of the promises and persuasion made use of by Dr. Baldacconi, he pointed out the design of his specious words, and wisely considering that it was dangerous for me to remain exposed to the batteries and ambuscades of the Romish priests, who, like



hawks upon their prey, watched me at every turning, so that I could not stir from the hotel without meeting now a Baldacconian, now a Franciscan, a Dominican, or a Jesuit, who upon some pretence or other, sought to engage me in conversation; he kindly proposed that I should rid myself of every vexation by paying him a visit, and I was thus saved from further annoyance.

Shortly after I became an inmate at the house of the Rev. J. C. Graves, Vicar of Laxton, in Northamptonshire, who showed me every mark in his power of Christian regard and sympathy. In a little time I went by invitation to Blatherwycke Park, the seat of Stafford O'Brien, Esq., where, with the kindest hospitality, I have lived until this time, excepting occasional visits to the Hon. and Rev. Leland Noel, Exton, and certain portions of my time spent at Stamford, a town in the neighbourhood of which I was occasionally occupied in giving to pupils instruction in the Italian language.

Oh, that my companions in slavery in the monasteries of San Bernardo and Santa Croce in Gerusalemme, could see me as I am, in perfect health, and with a cheerful mind, while they are taught to believe that the excommunication has penetrated my bones, and that I am consuming like a lamp whose oil is failing. Poor youths! seized with terror at the funereal ceremony which it is customary

to perform on the apostasy of any member of the Order, they do not know that it is merely a trick to terrify those present, and to chase from their minds every thought of imitating the example or following the footsteps of the fugitive; they do not know that their excommunication is but as the scarecrow which peasants fasten to a stick, and set in the midst of the corn-fields for the purpose of frightening away birds.

I know the powerful effect the mournful preparation for this ceremony has on the minds of the assistants. I remember the impression produced on my own when a similar anathema was pronounced against one of my brethren, the Signor Beltridi, who previously to my flight, had broken the monastic chain. I will relate the manner in which this excommunication is fulminated, for the benefit of those who are ignorant of the arts employed by Rome to chain down minds brought up in superstition, and to obscure in them every ray of light, whether of grace or of reason.

Every year, on Palm Sunday, after chanting the Martyrology, according to the Benedictine rule, they solemnly anathematize apostates. A black cross with a white cross in the centre is extended on the floor of the church; all the seats are hung with black. The candles on the altar being extinguished, the Superior puts on a purple cope and pro-



nounces, in a sepulchral tone, the Psalms 104, 90, 40, and orations analogous to the occasion, to which all the monks slowly respond, making long pauses between each verse, as though they were absorbed in meditation—frozen with horror. Then the Superior, who, during this dismal scene, holds in his hand a lighted torch, at the conclusion of the fortieth Psalm, with the words “Fiat, Fiat”—“so let it be, so let it be”—dashes it on the ground. It is impossible to describe the horror of the spectators at the extinguishing of this torch. the mere relation cannot impress the minds of persons unacquainted with the terrific ideas accompanying the word excommunication. Though in all books which speak of it, it is defined as a punishment entirely spiritual, the effects of which have no relation to the material well-being of life, nevertheless a far different idea has been industriously spread among the people, who firmly believe that excommunication is as the box of Pandora; that it poisons the air which the unfortunate being who has been struck by it breathes, envenoms his food, disturbs his sleep; and that, after a few days, consumptive, desperate, having drunk the dregs of the cup of bitterness on earth, he falls into the clutches of demons, ever obedient to the slightest nod of the Pope. Nor is the national credulity to be charged with these extravagances, it being an historical fact that the Pope, at one time,

thundered excommunications, bathing his pen in the very cup in which he adored the blood of Christ. That my companions, imbued with a large share of these absurd notions, should tremble at the fatal moment is not to be wondered at, nor yet that their terror should be renewed at the repetition made each year of this funereal ceremony.

Having brought my narrative to a conclusion, I would express my earnest desire that the truth of these facts may be fully established. I have written nothing but what may be authenticated by testimony, or by public documents. Though malice may tear these from the protocols of the Congregation of Bishops and Regulars, or from the archives of the Penitentiary, it cannot close the mouths of hundreds of witnesses. All Rome can bear testimony to my process for a declaration of the nullity of the vows, and very many are acquainted with my incarceration in *Sant Eusebio*. Much do I desire that my narrative might reach the hands of my parents and of my relations. But I know well the most watchful care will keep it far from what was once my home, and from all those who would receive it kindly. But could my words reach my friends, I would say to them, that I love them with a love more tender and sincere than ever; that the religion of Christ, which I follow in its evangelical purity, commands me to love them, even if they curse me. I would entreat



them not to listen to the malignant suggestions of the priests. I would tell them that their memory is impressed upon my heart, and that the sun never rises or sets without my thinking of them. How pleasant it is to think that this beneficent luminary sheds its rays upon them as well as upon me, however great may be the distance by which we are separated ; and lastly, I would assure them that I do not cease to implore the Giver of all good, to hasten in his mercy, that day in which my beloved Italy may at length be released from the spiritual and temporal darkness which surrounds her. Should that event occur, I shall then forget, in their arms, how much I have suffered, and with what delight I shall pray with them in spirit and in truth, and with them praise God for so great a blessing.

Soli Deo honor laus et gloria in sæcula sæculorum. Amen.